Negotiating Care Across Borders & Generations:

An Analysis of Care Circulation in Filipino Transnational Families in the Chubu Region of Japan

by

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This dissertation is dedication to
Mae McCallum; the main source of inspiration in my life.

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encountered difficult times and had many conflicts. My family is no different. However, like the families whose story I share, my family has been remarkably resilient. I thank all of them for, simply, being my family.

My mother; Mae McCallum, who passed away just before I began graduate studies, remains the single most important driving force behind this process. Whenever I got off track or felt like quitting, I always heard her calming voice in my head encouraging me and reminding me of the importance of finishing what I started. I am comforted that she is now in heaven smiling down at me and marvelling at the huge success I have become. I thank her for life and for everything she has done to make this achievement possible.

From the bottom of my heart, I thank you all.

List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

CPFA   Chubu Philippines Friendship Association

CFO   Commission on Filipinos Overseas

DAWN   Development Action for Women Network

FDI   Foreign Direct Investments

ICTs   Information and Communication Technologies

IFC   Iida Filipino Community

IOM   International Organization for Migration

JFC   Japanese Filipino Children

OFW   Overseas Filipino Worker

PMRW   Philippine Migrant Rights Watch

POEA   Philippine Overseas Employment Agency

PSA   Philippine Statistics Authority

RA   Republic Act

SMC   Scalabrini Migration Center

UN   United Nations

WB   World Bank

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

1.1 Context & Research Problem

Recent scholarship on the concept of family has evolved and now includes emphases on cultural dynamics, transnational geography; and individual as well as collective attitudes and emotions (Glick, 2010). These factors are used to analyze the formation and functioning of families in a new dynamic international context. Moreover, new models are emerging to assess how family values interact with structural conditions in both home and host countries. Despite these methodological and theoretical changes, there is still a predominant conception of the family as nuclear, coresidential and nationally-bound. Furthermore, Landolt & Da (2005) pointed out that transnational families; understood as families with members in more than one nation state, are largely regarded as temporary arrangements. Broadly speaking, due to increased mobility and improvements in transportation and communication technologies, coupled with desires/needs for better economic opportunities, enhanced lifestyles and social safety, more and more people of various demographic profiles are experiencing the dynamics of transnational family life. The image of the ideal nuclear family, as evident in much of the traditional literature on the sociology of the family and the consciousness of many social policymakers, is increasingly contested as the contemporary realities of family life move towards transnationality, particularly in Asia, as in other parts of the world (see Alipio, Lu & Yeah, 2015).

As a result, this phenomenon has received much attention from various stakeholders. In fact, much research has been done on how families and their members are affected by separation across international borders (see Baldassar et al. 2007; Bryceson & Vuorela 2002). One key

area of interrogation is care and how it is exchanged within these families. That is the focus of my dissertation. Situated in the lived experiences of Filipino transnational families with members in the Chubu region of Japan, I explore family ties, care configurations and the dynamics of 'care circulation'.

In this dissertation, I examine the circulation of family-based care work by looking at how care flows around the family network in a context of extended transnational separation. Concurring with recent scholarship, I demonstrate that care work and the definition of family is expansive and adaptable. The conception of 'care' that I adopt in this study is likewise broad and extensive; including any thoughts or actions that express love and concern for the life and wellbeing of others. The term 'transnational caregiving' refers to the exchange of care across national borders (Baldassar et al., 2007, p. 14). In this study, I acknowledge that there are various forms of caregiving by adopting Finch's (1989) five categories of familial care: emotional/moral, economic, accommodation, personal and practical. In her study, she found that the care exchanged between family members fell within one of the preceding categories and that these forms of care were exchanged at varying degrees of intensity and frequency. However, the provision of care is not automatic and cannot be assumed as such. Whether or not care is provided depends on *'normative obligation'* and *'negotiated commitment'* (Finch & Mason, 1993). According to Finch and Mason (1993), *'normative obligation'* depends on one's notion of duty and responsibility to family and is grounded in a particular society's definition of what is moral and right. They asserted, however, that family members do not necessarily abide by these normative expectations and therefore, the actual care provided is an outcome of a process of negotiation (with other family members and societal norms and expectations). What results from this negotiation process is called *'negotiated commitment'*. To enhance my analysis, I have also adopted Baldassar et al.'s (2007) perspective that another variable;

capacity, must be considered. Baldassar et al. (2007) argued that it is necessary to add capacity as a variable in any analysis of the provision of care, particularly as it relates to transnational families. They pointed out that even if a family member has a strong sense of duty to other family members, he/she might not be able to provide care due to various factors, which limit the ability to provide care. The combination of these theories reveals that, at a very basic level, family members' commitment to provide care (negotiated family commitment) is based on the interaction of a complex network of micro, meso and macro factors which directly or indirectly affect an individual's capacity and sense of obligation to provide care.

While the main analysis is focused on families as micro units, the transnational nature of these family relationships mandates an engagement with the larger meso and macro factors that mediate the provision and exchange of care. Over the last few decades, employers in more developed countries like Japan have sought workers from less developed countries. The Philippines has proven to be a steady source of such labour, not only in Asia but also in the Middle East, Europe and North America. As a result, migration from the Philippines has become commonplace, desirable and highly institutionalized. Although the Commission on Filipinos Overseas (CFO) is not currently releasing updates on the Stock Estimate of Filipinos Overseas, pending an approval by the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), they reported that as of December 2013, more than 10 million Filipinos were living overseas (about 10% of the country's population). Of the almost 2 million Filipinos living in South and East Asia, Japan accounts for approximately 11%. The commission also reported that between 1981 and 2015, Japan ranked as the third major country of destination of Filipino emigrants behind the US and Canada. Despite Japan's traditionally restrictive immigration policies, Filipinos continue to settle in the country. This can be attributed to the aging population and the increasing demand for nurses and caregivers. Additionally, Filipino-Japanese marriages are becoming more

popular (Asis & Battistella, 2013); and increasing numbers of Filipinos are migrating to Japan to study or work as English instructors, engineers, business consultants and other highly-skilled expatriates.

In contextualizing the increased dispersion of Filipino families, it is necessary to recognize that the Philippines is one of the most prolific migrant-sending countries in Asia with a highly institutionalized migration machinery. The state is integrally involved in the recruitment, deployment and repatriation of what Rodriguez (2010) calls *'migrants for export'*; even as it encourages national discourses surrounding perceived detrimental social impacts on the family in the absence of women. In much of Rhacel Parreñas' work, which I discuss later, she interrogates the local impacts of global economic activities and argues that the development of a labour export-oriented economy in the Philippines leads to a clash of competing gender ideologies regarding female domesticity. This clash arises from the state's economic dependence on women's work outside the country, on the one hand, and a traditional gender ideology that locates women's gendered responsibilities inside the domestic space, on the other.

In this larger context of national, regional and international mobility, where wealth and economic opportunities are unevenly distributed and ambivalent dynamics surrounding gender, family and social reproduction are obvious, sustained emigration of Filipinos has significantly affected institutions, social relations and social norms in the communities of migrants. For instance, many scholars contend that while women's role has been expanded to include breadwinning, there has not been a concomitant expansion of men's role to include caregiving and nurturance. This creates what is often referred to as a *'crisis of care'*, grounded in the care chains analysis, which has implications for the sustenance of good family life. Therefore, an exploration of these family dynamics and the possible implications becomes necessary.

These contextual factors that mediate the negotiation of care obligations among migrants and their family members make the Philippines a fertile site for studying care at the micro, but also the meso and macro levels. A nuanced interrogation of these issues aids our understanding of Filipino family culture, gender relations and familial separation; as well as increased international mobility precipitated by rising global demand and supply.

1.2 Objectives of the Study & Research Questions

In this study, I explore and document the experiences of members of Filipino transnational families in the Chubu region of Japan. Critical to this study is the examination of social relations within these families and the impact of temporal and spatial separation on family dynamics, particularly as it relates to the exchange of caregiving. More specifically, the following questions are answered.

Main Research Question：

To what extent are Filipino transnational families in the Chubu region of Japan able to sustain their familial ties and keep their families intact; despite extended geographical separation and various changes in their family arrangements?

Sub-questions:

1. How is care exchanged in these families?
2. What kind of social and emotional relations exist between family members?
3. What strategies are adopted to deal with challenges within these families?
4. How do gender norms impact on caregiving in these families?

1.3 Methodology

1.3.1 Research Design

This dissertation is based on a qualitative study of Filipino migrants who live in the Chubu region of Japan and their family members in the Philippines. It draws on data collected through in-depth interviews as well as participation in and observation of family life in five prefectures in Japan (Nagano, Aichi, Shizuoka, Gifu and Mie) and several parts of Metro Manila and Cebu City in the Philippines. I also conducted fieldwork in the provinces of Bulacan and Cavite. Some interviews and/or conversations to clarify already collected data were conducted online via Skype, FaceTime or other videoconferencing media. Additionally, I followed the online behaviour and posts of some of the respondents (primarily younger ones) who had become 'friends' with me on social media. The bulk of my fieldwork was conducted between July 2016 and May 2019, although my interaction with the participants is ongoing. For the purpose of fieldwork, I have visited the Philippines multiple times and stayed for periods ranging from two weeks to two and a half months. During the period of my fieldwork, I did an internship for two months at the Development Action for Women Network (DAWN), where I was able to interact closely with Filipinas who migrated to Japan as entertainment workers and have now returned and settled in the Philippines (some forcibly). I also interacted with their Japanese-Filipino Children (JFCs) whose Japanese fathers are mostly living in Japan.

In total, I have conducted interviews with and observation of members of forty-three families, some of whom are living in Japan while others live in the Philippines. Of the eighty-one participants in the study, fifty-four are adults and twenty-seven are children. In terms of gender, I interviewed twenty men, thirty-four women, twelve boys and fifteen girls. The data collected were analyzed by focusing on common themes and

patterns. Where anomalies were found, they were isolated for deeper interrogation and clarification via electronic media after I had returned from the field.

Although the study was primarily qualitative, quantitative data was used to support qualitative findings where necessary. As explained earlier, the method adopted was a multi-sited ethnographic approach whereby family members in both countries were engaged. An ethnographic approach, which combines interviews with observation of participants, yields a richer understanding of the subjects of the study and the context (McHugh, 2000; Punch, 2012). Other data and insights were gathered from government and other official publications as well as published academic articles. The results of the study are largely descriptive, with rich evocative anecdotes and narratives.

The approach adopted for this study is flexible, adaptable and suitable for the lifestyles of transnational families, which often revolve around mobility and spontaneity. The flexibility and adaptability of this research relates to space and time, particularly regarding interview schedules and observation of family life.

My research methodology is qualitative to the extent that it is "subjective, interpretative, process orientated and holistic" in nature (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2004, p. 3). Hesse-Biber & Leavy (2004) recommend qualitative designs for researchers who "seek to understand the meaning or worldview of a particular subject or want to listen to the subjective experiences of others and somehow make sense of them..." (p. 4). Ethnographic fieldwork is perhaps the most appropriate method for studying transnational migration (Glick-Schiller, 2003), particularly as it relates to transnational family life. The need to conduct research at more than one site is not the only important factor here. Of equal and perhaps greater significance is the demand for a broader perspective and a deeper analysis of social relations and flows across disparate

geographies. The actual subject of transnational migration research is not the migrant only but his/her kin who are left behind. Punch (2012) pointed out that '[to] fully grasp the complexities of migrant processes, it is important to understand the social, cultural and economic contexts at both the sender and the destination communities' (p. 1013). Madianou & Miller (2011, p. 468) also called for 'research on transnational processes, which is methodologically truly transnational'.

Multi-sited ethnography focuses on objects of study, which are "mobile and multiply situated" (Marcus, 1995, p. 102). This relatively new offspring of the traditional space-bounded ethnography has not only been discussed widely but has garnered some criticism (see Falzon, 2009; Lapegna, 2009). The most notable line of methodological tension seems to be the trade-off between the scope and depth of a seemingly scattered approach (Hage, 2005). In response, Horst (2009) asserted that, rather than undermining ethnography in the traditional sense, a multi-sited approach extends and diversifies, and therefore enriches the articulation of lived experiences, which ethnography seeks to capture. Moreover, multi-sited ethnography allows for an ethnographic engagement with large-scale, geographically dispersed entities without jeopardising the intimate and accurate representation of people's lives. Indeed, Baldassar et al., (2007) posited that a strictly traditional ethnographic approach was not only limited but also impossible for their study, which aimed to understand how care is provided and exchanged by people in several different countries with varying migratory experiences.

There are noticeable parallels between the transnational perspective and a multi-sited ethnographic methodology. Marcus' (2009) disagreement with the notion that ethnographic sites are supposedly isolated and fundamentally foreign or seemingly outside the contours of normalcy is strikingly similar to Wimmer & Glick-Schiller's

(2003) critique of methodological nationalism, which is widely covered in the transnationalism literature and discussed later in this study. From both perspectives, we see that the implicit overreliance on a territorially bounded and supposedly standardized research site is unfounded and limited.

The end point of this debate on the efficacy of the multi-sited ethnographic approach lies in an understanding of the fundamental purpose of such an approach. As it relates to transnational migration, a deeper ethnographic engagement with the interconnected nature of people, who are spatially and temporally dispersed, is necessary to prevent risky generalizations based on limited analyses (Falzon, 2009).

1.3.2 Research Location/Site

The Chubu Region of Japan

Chubu (otherwise referred to as the Central region or Central Japan) is a region situated on Japan's largest island; Honshu, which is in the middle of the Japanese archipelago. As of June 2019, the Chubu region had a population of 23,010,276 people according to government data. Due to its huge and geographically diverse landmass (72,572.34 square kilometres), the Chubu region is generally divided into three separate sub-regions including the Tokai area, the Koshinetsu area and the Hokuriku area. Also, another sub-region called the Chukyo metropolitan area is sometimes identified when speaking of business or commerce.

The three main sub-regions are further broken down into nine prefectures. The Hokuriku area consist of Fukui prefecture, Ishikawa prefecture and Toyama prefecture while the Koshinetsu area consist of Yamanashi prefecture, Nagano prefecture and

Niigata prefecture. Finally, Shizuoka prefecture, Gifu prefecture and Aichi prefecture are included in the Tokai area.

Chubu is located between the Kanto region (which includes the capital city of Tokyo) and the Kansai region (which includes major cities like Osaka and Kyoto). It is home to the major city of Nagoya, which is the largest city in the region and the fourth largest city in Japan. Nagoya is the capital of Aichi prefecture and boasts one of Japan's major international ports alongside other major cities like Tokyo, Osaka, Kobe, Yokohama, Chiba, and Kitakyushu. Nagoya also ranks as one of the fifty largest urban areas worldwide.

Many of the world's most prominent electronics, aircraft and automotive companies are located in the Chubu region. Manufacturing is the largest industry in the region. However, there are also many smaller local industries such as textiles, ceramics and other traditional Japanese art. Banking and finance, as well as tourism are also thriving industries in the region. Chubu features both world-renowned destinations and less famous attractions. According to the Japan National Tourism Organization, the Tokai area is probably one of the most authentic Japanese regions; with a good mix of picturesque nature sites, ancient heritage and booming modern industries. Mount Fuji; Japan's highest mountain and one of the world's most iconic peaks, is surrounded by the Fuji Five Lakes and many natural hot springs such as Hakone, which are major tourist attractions. Another major site that attracts numerous tourists is Shirakawa-go, a World Heritage site that features unique tatch-roof cottages. Japan's pre-eminent shrine; Ise-jingu is also located in the Chubu region. Therefore, it is no surprise that Chubu is one of the key players in driving Japan's economy and international fame.

The following figures show graphical represents of the region:

Figure 1   Map showing the Chubu region with prefectures
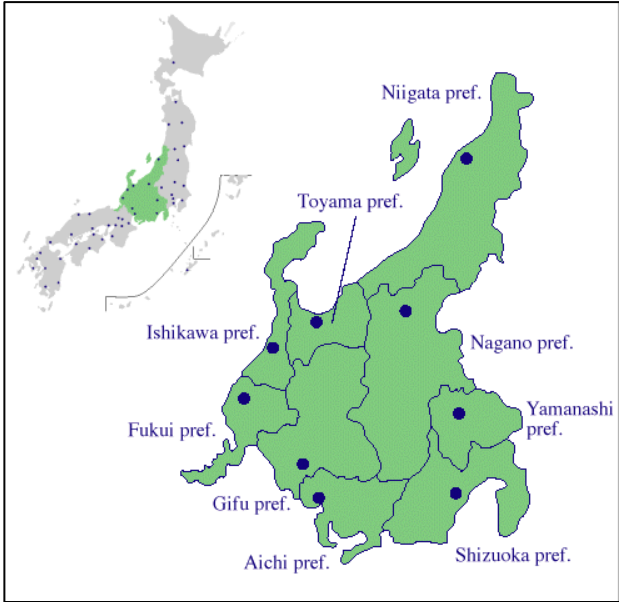
Source: https://www.eorc.jaxa.jp/en/hatoyama/etc/images/prefecture/chubu_dstr_e.html

Figure 2   Map showing the Chubu region with prefectural capital cities

Source: https://jref.com/articles/chubu-travel-guide.152/

Filipino Community in the Chubu Region

The Chubu Philippines Friendship Association [中部フィリピン友好協会] is one of the most prominent evidence of the presence of Filipinos in the Chubu region. This community-based organization is a volunteer group consisting of Filipinos and their kin who live in the Chubu area. It was established in 1981 as the Association of Intermarried Couples but the name was subsequently changed to Chubu Philippines Friendship Association three years later. The group is aimed at providing support to the Filipino diaspora in the region while facilitating cooperation and interaction between Filipinos and Japanese.

Judging from the active presence of Filipinos in the region and beyond, it seems that they have adapted to and assimilated well into the Japanese society. They have established thriving families and are able to access jobs in various industries, despite language barriers, immigration restrictions, social stereotypes and various other challenges.

According to the Japanese Ministry of Justice, at the end 2017, there were 260,553 Filipinos living in Japan - the 4th largest foreign community along with Vietnamese. In addition, the Filipino community accounts for the largest portion of English-speaking foreigners in Japan, outnumbering the Americans who rank second. Japanese government data also shows that approximately 50% of Filipinos in Japan are permanent residents. This is much higher than the general average of 29% for foreign nationals residing in Japan. Unsurprisingly, women account for just over 70% of all Filipinos in Japan, while men account for 28.1%. According to Osaki and Masangkay (2018), citing Marian Jocelyn Tirol-Ignacio; Consul General to the Philippine Embassy in Tokyo, a significant number of the Filipino women in Japan who are in their thirties to fifties are

permanent residents, having worked as entertainers/hostesses since the 1980s and settled in the country by marrying Japanese men and having Japanese-Filipino children with them. Filipino women were able to secure Japanese spouse visas followed by permanent residence after staying in Japan for an extended period. These women were part of a wave of migrants who were attracted by Japan's booming economy and relatively slack immigration policies regarding foreigner entertainers, at that time. However, the Japanese government's tightened restrictions on entertainer visas since 2005 have stemmed the flow of this category of migrants, even though there are still Filipino women who work as entertainers/hostesses in Japan and who get married and/or have children with Japanese men.

The Chubu region seems to be an attractive place for Filipinos. The Ministry of Justice reported that, as of June 2018; 34,514 Filipinos were living in Aichi prefecture; making it the number one place of residence for Filipinos in Japan. This can, probably, be attributed to the presence of large industries that provide employment opportunities. These thriving industries need workers, but with the declining and aging population in Japan, they must look to foreigners to fill vacancies. Given the long history of Japan-Philippines relations and the fact that a sizable number Filipinos are of Japanese descent [Nikkeijin 日系人], the Filipino community proves to be a suitable source of workers. In fact, many Filipino nikkeijins are granted long-term resident visas and they have chosen to stay in Aichi prefecture, where the cost of living is cheaper compared to Tokyo – home of the second largest Filipino community in Japan. Of course, there are a myriad of other reasons why many Filipinos choose the Chubu region to be their home.

Many researchers and journalists have pointed out that Filipinos are in Japan for the long haul. They have adapted to the Japanese lifestyle and the comparatively good

wages allow them to enjoy a comfortable life and send remittances home. This is coupled with the close proximity of the two countries, which can be bridged by a 4-hour flight – less in some cases. Given various push and pull factors, it is reasonable to assume that Filipinos will continue to seek out opportunities to travel to and reside in Japan for the foreseeable future.

1.3.3 Sampling

A purposive-snowball sampling technique was adopted. Considering the sensitive nature of the matters discussed and the financial and time constraints, it was more practical and productive to ask for referrals. This also facilitated a more trusting and truthful interaction with the respondents. In fact, during interviews, some participants volunteered to recruit others, even before I requested. Some people to whom I was referred were excited to share their stories while others were reluctant and even refused, citing possible 'damage' to themselves or their families. Although I initially planned to start my study by interviewing Filipinos who are based in Japan and then asking those family members to connect me with their relatives in the Philippines, the process of my data collection did not play out in that way. In some cases, while I was in Philippines I met people who had family members in Japan so I decided to include them in the study. In those cases, I met the Japan-based family member(s) after I had returned to Japan.

As explained earlier, interviews with and observation of members of forty-three families were conducted. Each of the families involved has at least one family member who lives, works and/or studies in the Chubu region of Japan. Some of the Japan-based participants are permanent residents/citizens while others are undocumented migrants. To my knowledge, none of the participants are refugees/asylum seekers. I have also included 'temporary' contract-based workers or students who came to Japan on a scholarship, as

well as privately-funded students. I am particularly cautious in using the term 'temporary' because although they identify as temporary migrants, some participants have been living in Japan for more than five years. As portrayed in the foregoing and elaborated further in the narratives, the sample of participants in this study are diverse in terms of age, gender, social class, educational achievement, marital status, sexual orientation and immigration status.[1] However, I must highlight that, although it was not an intended outcome, due to the snow-ball sampling technique adopted, most of the respondents seem to be relatively better-off compared to other Filipinos living in Japan. Therefore, the findings of this study cannot be generalized as the reality of all Filipino transnational families in the Chubu region of Japan.

1.3.4 Ethical Considerations

Prior to interviewing the respondents, I explained the objectives of the study and provided each respondent with my contact information in the event that he/she would like to retract his/her statements or change any information provided. Considering the vulnerability of migrants and the possibility that some respondents are undocumented immigrants, written consent was not required. However, before starting the interviews, explicit verbal consent was requested. Because of respondents' reluctance or explicit rejection, I did not record interviews but took detailed fieldnotes, which were clarified and augmented later wherever gaps existed. Data collected will remain private between myself and the participants. To protect the identity of the participants in this study, pseudonyms are used in the narratives presented.

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[1] Details of the respondents are included in the appendices.

Because of the sensitivity of this study and the potential emotional burden on participants, I exercised extreme caution, sensitivity and understanding. The participants were not forced to talk about anything with which they were not comfortable. Any possible psychological, emotional or social stress during and after the interview were reduced or eliminated as much as possible. For the children who participated in this study, consent was received from parents and/or adult caregivers; and an adult family member was always present during interviews with children, particularly younger ones (aged 8 ~ 12). However, there were some unsupervised conversations with older children (teenagers) on social media. These exchanges were brief and involved the exchange of pleasantries and basic conversations about general wellbeing and performance in school.

1.4 Significance of the Study

An analysis of transnational families is not only interesting but also necessary for a better understanding of how the intersection of transnational separation and various socio-political create new arrangements and dynamics within existing families. This kind of analysis provides new insights on the definition and composition of families. It also explores who belong and why they belong to these families even if separated across international borders. Some researchers have found that the manner in which transnational ties have been maintained and its intensity is inconsistent. Moreover, emotional pain and heartbreak is not uncommon (see Menjívar & Abrego, 2009; Schmalzbauer 2004, 2008). Indeed, Ryan (2011) pointed out that the emotions experienced by members of transnational families remain under-researched and therefore missing from the existing literature on transnational migration and its implications for family life.

A deep understanding of transnational family dynamics demands new methodologies that are able to navigate the intimate and complex spaces within which transnational families live their daily lives. Multi-sited research, which transcends geographic confines and illustrates how different 'spaces' are nested together, provides a suitable starting point (Marcus, 1995). Social enquiry into transnationalism, particularly as it relates to families, has so far been dominated by comparative studies exploring subjects in bounded spaces. Essentially, these studies have been focused on either ends of the transnational continuum. The need to take a broader view (from both the sending and receiving countries) of transnational families is yet to be satisfied. The method adopted in this study (multi-sited ethnography), however, goes beyond national borders to elucidate the interrelations between the different geographies of the families being studied. Geography is not the only limitation of current research. There is also a gap in terms of who is covered in the studies. Typically, current studies focus on transnational children, fathers, mothers or other family members as separate sub-groups, but little research is done which takes a more comprehensive look at these family members as a unit.

Finally, much of the research done on transnational families has been focused on migrants in host countries in North America and Europe. As a result, well-needed cases from other regions such as Africa and Asia are largely missing from the literature. Indeed, Huang, Yeoh & Lam (2008) called for more research to be done on Asian transnational families.

To fill these gaps and enhance current scholarship on transnational families, this study took a multi-sited and comprehensive approach in terms of who participated in the study and where these participants are located. Additionally, the case taken for this study had never been done and proved to be interesting and insightful.

Beyond its academic value, this study has implications for government policy regarding family reunification and social welfare (provision of care for the elderly and children) together with laws affecting immigrant populations, refugees and other vulnerable migrants.

1.5 Outline of the Dissertation

In the true spirit of this dissertation (the telling of stories and their implications), I have deeply considered how to organize it in order to tell an empirical but interesting, inspiring and thought-provoking story about a diverse group of migrants and their families; and how they experience and negotiate their familial separation. Based on my considerations, I have organized my dissertation as follows:

Chapter 2 establishes this study's theoretical foundation by exploring the existing literature and theories as it relates to transnationalism and migration. In this chapter, I first consider the core concepts of the transnational paradigm and their theoretical developments over time. In doing this, I also examine the criticisms levied against this paradigm and the way forward for transnationalism as a theory/concept. Next, I discuss how family relationships are affected by transnational migration and the subsequent temporal and spatial separation. Here, I detail how transnational motherhood, fatherhood and childhood are experienced and addressed in the existing literature. I also briefly discuss the issue of elderly care in transnational families. Finally, I delineate the existing gaps in the literature that this study addresses.

Since this study investigates how care is provided and exchanged, it is important to identify what roles are involved in order to further interrogate their performance. Therefore, in **Chapter 3**, I present eight typologies of caring roles and discuss how they affect and are affected by care circulation. These typologies were identified based on a life course perspective and are organized under two broad categories: childhood and adulthood. This chapter acts as a transition to the next two substantive chapters where I discuss the practical and symbolic strategies involved in providing care and how families and their members mitigate any problems or challenges.

In **Chapter 4**, I show how and why the Filipino traditions of gift-giving and the sending of balikbayan boxes, as well as the building and/or acquisition of real estate, are closely linked to the creation, embodiment and maintenance of familial ties and belonging, despite geographic separation. Here, I explicate the relationship between intimacy and material exchanges and economic transactions by taking into account the local cultural values that underpin and drive these exchanges.

Chapter 5 develops my analysis of caregiving dynamics by considering the concept of 'presence' and how it is established and maintained across borders using Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). In this chapter, I engage with critical issues related to how communication media shape the exchange of care and intimacy within contexts of familial dispersion. I also discuss the ways in which new and older forms of communication shape intimate interactions and reconstitute the temporal and spatial aspects of Filipino transnational family life.

Chapter 6 expands the discussion by situating familial care in the context of a broader socio-political structure. This undertaking is fruitful because it allows for the extension of the definition of care and the recognition of alternative ways of providing care not only to family members but also to one's homeland. As I argue in this chapter, care can be conceptualized as social remittances. Moreover, to the extent that the Philippine state fails to provide adequate livelihoods for its people, even as it is highly involved in state-led labor brokerage and the deployment of discourses that frame the performance of familial responsibilities as a form of national patriotism, any care provided by transnational family members can be seen as caring for one's country because it relieves the burdens of the state in taking care of those family members.

Chapter 7 then summarizes the findings of the study and relates them to existing knowledge. I consider the implications of my results and their empirical and conceptual contributions to the understanding of kinship ties, care work and extended geographical separation. As the final chapter, here, I situate the findings of my study in the broader context of increased mobility and various meso and macro factors that mediate transnational family relationships. This makes it possible to show the multidimensional significance of the study.

CHAPTER 2

Review of Existing Literature & Theories

2.1 Transnationalism & Migration

The transnational paradigm is not a completely new phenomenon. In fact, it has been around for more than two and a half decades. However, as it relates to human mobility, the explanation and discussion of this paradigm is still incipient. To lay the foundation for this study, in the following sub-sections, I present the basic theoretical concepts, their development and the criticisms levied against it. I also discuss the way forward for this theory.

2.1.1 Theoretical Development and Core Concepts

Migration scholarship has undergone significant changes over recent decades. The frameworks within which migration is considered and elaborated have been transformed to reflect a more nuanced consideration of current political, technological and social disruptions across the globe. Notwithstanding previous research, which indicated transnational links, transnationalism did not emerge as a new paradigm in migration studies until the early 1990s when migration scholars highlighted the failures of conventional theories to adequately elaborate the transnational ties of migrants and their networks. Basch et al. (1994) and Glick Schiller et al. (1992) were key players in this shift. They developed the 'transnational migration' paradigm as a new framework for the contemporary study of migration across national borders. Their main thesis was that transnational migrants could be active in two distinct locations and that their involvement in multiple networks across different countries did not prevent them from fully integrating

in their host countries. This argument challenged the conventional perspective, grounded in the assimilation theory, that immigrants' links to their home countries weakened over time as they adjusted to their host countries (Gordon, 1964). Central to this theory was the notion that assimilation was unidirectional and sequential and that assimilation into the host country meant uprooting and breaking ties with the country of origin. The result of this interpretive shift was the emergence of a new theoretical approach to migration. According to Basch et al. (1994), transnationalism refers to "the processes by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement" (p. 6). This initial definition has since been widely accepted and developed by other scholars (see Levitt & Glick Schiller, 2004; Pries, 2005 and Smith, 2005 among others) who highlighted the fluidity of the social spaces within which transnational migration takes place. Moreover, they elaborated the simultaneous embeddedness of transnational migrants who maintain multidimensional links in multiple geographies. As some researchers pointed out, transnational migrants 'live across national borders and link together different contexts' (Schuerkens, 2005, p. 550). Thus, through their interactions with migrants, even those members of the network who have not actually migrated are drawn into these processes of change. That is to say that even the lives of family members who are left behind are transformed by new life experiences and perspectives obtained and shared by migrants (Levitt, 2001). Essentially, migrants' political, economic and cultural practices and networks could not be adequately captured and theorized within the context of confined national borders.

Globalization, coupled with significant advancements in communication and transportation technology, have increased the likelihood that transnational migrants will maintain their participation in various processes taking place in their home countries and

in other locations in the transnational network. The starting point of the transnational migration perspective was not the nation state per se, but the dynamics of global power. Studies on globalization usually focus on economic processes and global disparities (Held & McGrew, 2007). In its earliest formulation, the transnational paradigm was theoretically situated within the context of global capitalism, which Basch et al. (1994) and Glick Schiller et al. (1992) argued, created a global restructuring of capital and labour; leading to economic disruptions and dispossession in developing countries. The end result was emigration to more developed countries. Somewhat related to studies on globalization, but fundamentally different, Diaspora Studies focus on historical accounts of migration, analyzing issues of culture and identity (Cohen, 2008). Specifically, the focus is on how migrants and their offsprings create new communities in distant places and how they maintain connections with their ancestral homelands. Unlike these two areas of study, transnationalism focuses on the 'flows' themselves. Studies of transnationalism explore the networked lives of migrants across borders (Levitt, 2001; Mazzucato, 2008; Vertovec, 2009). The focus of transnationalism studies is not so much about locality (such as 'country of origin' and 'country of destination' or home and host countries) as it is about the connections created and maintained by migrants across national borders. Hence, transnationalism encompasses not just networks established between home and host countries, but also links and flows across other geographies. Scholars such as Levitt & Jaworsky (2007) pointed out that this perspective is an appropriate lens through which we can analyse the changing dynamics of contemporary migration.

The concept of 'transnational social spaces' emerged in the 2000s as another framework of enquiry on transnational migration. This conceptual enhancement was

pioneered by researchers like Faist (2000) and Levitt & Glick Schiller (2004). Faist (2000) put forward a set of transnational topographies to explain the characteristics of 'transnational social spaces' and their impacts. According to him, they could be: (1) weakly embedded and short-term (leading to dispersion and assimilation); (2) strongly embedded but short-term (resulting in transnational exchange and reciprocity); (3) weakly embedded and long-term (giving rise to transnational networks); or 4) strongly embedded and long-term (establishing transnational communities). Peggy Levitt and Nina Glick Schiller's contribution to this theory came through their articulation of what they called 'transnational social fields', which refers to "interlocking networks of social relationships through which ideas, practices, and resources are unequally exchanged, organized, and transformed (p. 1009). These relationships transcend social, political and geographic borders (Levitt & Glick Schiller, 2004). This idea of transnational social fields highlighted the limitation of analyzing transnational migration from the perspective of nation states. Rather, it focused on the creation of a space where national boundaries blur and actors and processes in different geographic locations become as one, virtually cohabiting the same transnational space. In this space, different transnational networks intersect and interact with each other. Another key contribution of Levitt & Glick Schiller (2004) was their distinction between 'ways of being' and 'ways of belonging' in transnational social fields (p. 1010). According to them, 'ways of being' refer to the mundane, sometimes unconscious, daily social relations and practices of migrants (such as speaking the language and participating in local activities in the host country). Conversely, 'ways of belonging' accounts for the conscious, deliberate ways in which migrants express and solidify their allegiance to the home country/culture (for instance, participation in diasporic activities or sending home remittances).

Since its initial formulation, scholars have tried to establish the transnational migration perspective as a mainstream theory by delineating its core concepts and framing it not as a contradiction of, but complimentary to, the previously established assimilationist model of migration. Essentially, efforts were made to reconcile both paradigms. In addition, there have been debates regarding the appropriate parameters and levels of analysis. Smith and Guarnizo (1998) distinguished 'transnationalism from above' and 'transnationalism from below'. According to them, the former refers to transnationalism led by global capitalists, political institutions and media giants while the latter refers to transnationalism emerging from the grassroots. This distinction was grounded in the intersection of economic power, human relations and politics and how these spheres affect the pursuit of interests. Building on his earlier work, Guarnizo (2000) described 'core transnationalism' as those activities that: a) are central to the individual's habitual life; b) are done on a regular basis; and c) are patterned and fairly predictable. On the other hand, 'expanded transnationalism' incorporates those migrants who are involved in transnational activities intermittently, for instance, in the event of natural disasters, political instability or other emergencies in the home countries. Itzigsohn et al. (1999, p. 323) also made a distinction between 'narrow' (highly institutionalized and continuous activities comprising regular travel) and 'broad' (intermittent or loosely linked activities with irregular or no movement) transnationalism. In light of this distinction, Portes (2003) contended that the analysis of transnationalism should be confined to those persons who are officially and frequently involved in 'strict' transnational activities. Despite much effort to clearly delineate, index and measure transnationalism, it remains a concept requiring refinement and consensus regarding its definition and structure (Waldinger, 2008).

2.1.2 Criticisms of the Transnationalism Paradigm

Since the early 1990s, transnationalism has been one of the most widely adopted conceptual frameworks to analyse and discuss the interconnected nature of goods, capital and people. Nevertheless, critics affirm that the concept has been haphazard and loosely developed. Some critics took issue with the terminology, highlighting the lack of clarity on the differences among international, transnational and global activities. Terms such as: 'translocalism', 'bi-localism', 'bi-nationalism' and 'trans-state activity' has been proffered as suitable alternatives (see Barkan, 2006; Lucassen, 2006; Waldinger & Fitzgerald, 2004).

Another issue of contention among scholars was the scope and importance of transnationalism. Some argued that many scholarly assertions were based on case studies of Latin American and Caribbean migrants to the United States (Dahinden, 2005; Waldinger & Fitzgerald, 2004). They pointed out that these case studies were not truly representative of other migrant groups because that region had a unique social and historical relationship with the United States. These claims were bolstered by Alejandro Portes and other scholars who revealed that the majority (85-90%) of Dominican, El Salvadorian and Mexican migrants in the United States who participated in their study were not involved in regular and sustained transnational activism (Guarnizo et al., 2003; Portes et al., 2002). The critics took issue with what they saw as an inherent bias in transnationalism studies regarding who are included in studies and who are not. They pointed out that transnationalism research usually ignores a significant group of migrants who are not actively involved in transnational activities but who are central to a comprehensive understanding of transnationalism (Guarnizo, 2003; Landolt, 2001; Smith, 2003). Notwithstanding this potent argument, Faist (2000) cautioned against

assuming that all migrants are transnational. Further, he highlighted that only those migrants who are actively involved in the development and promotion of sociocultural, economic and/or political networks across nation states should be regarded as transnational. According to him, to include migrants who do not engaged in these activities would be inaccurate and problematic. Despite his earlier arguments, Portes (2003) conceded that the significance of transnational activities, as an area of study, does not depend on the extent to which people engage in them on a daily basis.

Scholars like Waldinger & Fitzgerald (2004) asserted that the idea of transnationalism was not a novel phenomenon because migrants have continuously sustained connections with their countries of origin or ancestral homelands. Indeed, throughout human history, there have been social, political and economic interactions across different localities. Since the mapping and establishment of modern nation states, the flow and movement of people across national borders have not subsided. Today, it remains an enduring phenomenon. Anthropological and historical studies provide evidence of individuals and families migrating transnationally. Many researchers have documented the transnational engagements of immigrants who migrated to the United States in the Industrial era (see Chan, 2006; Foner, 2000; Morawska, 2004 & Gabaccia, 2000). Moreover, Iriye & Saunier (2009) highlighted that peasants from poorer regions of the Global North migrated to newly industrialized countries in Europe and the Americas from the 1830s to the 1920s. Also, due to political oppression, migrants from many regions around the world had to leave their homes. For instance, many Jews fled Eastern Europe and Russia during the holocaust. Regardless of the reason for migration, migrants maintained connections with their countries of origin and even in cases where they could not return to or visit their home countries, they maintained contact through

written correspondences and later, via telephone. Research has shown that these transnational networks of migrants played key roles in influencing politics and nation building in countries like Chile, China, Korea, Greece and Italy (Gabaccia & Ottanelli, 2001; Laliotou, 2004; McKeown, 2001; Peddie, 2014; Smith, 1998). Considering that these transnational processes and practices have been well established for many decades and that migrants' ties with their home countries have always been actively and strongly maintained, Waldinger & Fitzgerald (2004) questioned the novelty of the arguments articulated by the proponents of transnationalism. Indeed, when the transnationalism paradigm emerged in the 1990s, the phenomenon itself was not new but the specific transnational practices took on different forms and were done with more frequency and within a wider scope, perhaps due to developments in transportation and communication technologies. Furthermore, Smith (2003) pointed out that creating a new lens through which we could combine and analyse the details was innovative, even if the phenomenon was not new in and of itself. As Smith puts it: 'If transnational life existed in the past but was not seen as such, then the transnational lens does the new analytical work of providing a way of seeing what was there that could not be seen before.' (p. 725). Many scholars accept that, among the first generation of migrants, transnational processes and practices persist and are widespread. They, however, are not convinced that these transnational ties will continue over the generations (Lucassen, 2004; Portes et al., 1999). These beliefs are linked to surveys which show that second and third generation migrants are less fluent in the languages of the countries of origin. Studies also revealed that children of immigrants were less likely to seek residence in the homelands of their ancestors (Alba & Nee, 2003; Kasinitz et al., 2002; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). Perhaps, transnational activities may not be considered as an essential part of the daily lives of

second and third generation migrants. Therefore, they may not take part in those activities and practices as frequently and as intensely as their parents and grandparents. However, one cannot assume that they are not active participants in transnational social fields because even if they never return to the ancestral homeland, offsprings of first-generation immigrants are usually direct recipients of social remittances from the home country by virtue of their intimate involvement and nurturance in the social networks and transnational social spaces of their ancestors (Fouron & Glick Schiller, 2002; Levitt & Glick Schiller, 2004; Pries, 2004). Additionally, as Waters & Jimenez (2005) posited, there may be a need to rethink the concept of 'generations' since new migrants are constantly replenishing the stock of first-generation migrants (new immigrants). What is more, "at any point in time each generation is a mix of cohorts and each cohort has a mix of generations" (p. 121).

One of the most significant contributions of proponents of the transnationalism paradigm is the work they have done to highlight the limitations resulting from what they called 'methodological nationalism' (Wimmer & Glick Schiller, 2003). The concept of 'methodological nationalism' explains the notion that the social world is fundamentally grounded in the context of nation states. However, transnational research shows that, in reality, social relations and geographical conceptions are far more fluid and often transcends the confines of national borders. Wimmer & Glick Schiller (2003) pointed out that the nation state is not an appropriate framework for analyzing social life. They argued that it was too simplistic and limited and that analyses of such dynamic processes must be more expansive, conceptual and reflective of the perceptions of space and time of those who are involved in transnational activities and relations. Moreover, Waters and Jimenez (2005) also argued that state-centric analyses regarding international relations were

insufficient, especially in migration studies. While some accepted these claims, others pushed back, arguing that these ideas served to undermine sovereignty and the efficacy of national borders. After all, national borders are what give nation-states their status as such. In response, scholars of transnationalism affirmed their recognition of the significance and durability of national borders; the economic, political and military powers linked to those borders and the continued rhetoric regarding sovereignty and national allegiance (Smith, 2001; Yeoh et al., 2003). Furthermore, they clarified their position, highlighting that they did not see a decline in the notion of nation states but rather, a multiplication of the links between the state and those inside and outside its borders; essentially, a reconfiguration of national and transnational relations. The fact that migrants' ability to make political claims (e.g. citizenship, permanent residency or asylum) are facilitated or controlled by the state demonstrates the inability to circumvent the state as a key agent in shaping transnational processes and practices (Koopmans & Statham, 2003).

2.1.3 The Theoretical Way Forward

Understandably, the literature on transnationalism still lacks clarity regarding how it is defined and elaborated. There is also need for deeper research on the intergenerational aspects of transnational activities and relationships. Hence, scholars on both sides still actively engage in debates and will continue to do so in the foreseeable future. Nevertheless, with the globalization of the media, labor markets and economic activities and the contraction of time and space due to technological revolutions in the communication and transportation industries, the study of transnationalism will intensify and become ever more relevant (Foner, 2000; Vertovec, 2004).

Caglar (2016), in her assessment of the current state of transnationalism research, asserted that the fault lines in current scholarship lies in the resilience of 'methodological nationalism', despite substantial efforts to overcome widespread fixation on national borders. She also pointed to the weak conceptualization of state territoriality in the context of globalization. Her main argument here is that despite the focus on global dynamics of power and relationships, the paradigm's fundamental analysis is grounded in the context of a world system based on nation states. According to her, '…even in its most global and power-cantered formulations, the transnational migration perspective conceptualized the power hierarchies and the unequal power relations between different nation states' (p. 69). Glick-Schiller and Caglar (2009, 2011) also highlighted that issues related to statehood, sovereignty and state territoriality, particularly as it relates to transformations taking place in the context of globalization, are still to be fully theorized and articulated.

As expressed by these scholars, who are themselves proponents of the transnationalism paradigm, going forward, there is a need to engage more deeply with the relational dynamics between seemingly independent but closely related processes as it relates to nation states and national territories. From a methodological standpoint, there is also a need to create a truly relational framework within which both migrants and non-migrants can be documented and analyzed.

2.2 Family, Migration & Caregiving

Having looked at the fundamental concepts and ideas related to transnationalism, I now turn my attention to the more specific and practical ways in which a transnational optic is used to analyze families and kinship networks.

2.2.1 Family Relations in a Transnational Context

Research on transnational families, until more recently, focused on migrants as individual actors and where they were viewed as groups, they were categorized based on sex, race and class. Migrants were largely not seen in terms of their relational embeddedness in larger social structures such as the family. Ironically, migration research has shown how families influence the migrants' decision to migrate, their actual migration process, their assimilation into the host country and how they behave in their transnational social fields, particularly, as it relates to maintaining kinship ties and bonds with their home country. In essence, family relations are usually attributed to normative understandings or simply taken for granted (Mazzucato & Schans, 2011). Nevertheless, current academic literature discusses the multifaceted and asymmetrical relationships, which exist in families transformed by spatial and temporal separation across national borders. Perhaps, the most seminal work theorizing transnational families was done by Bryceson & Vuorela (2002), who grounded their theory in the earlier pioneering work of Glick Schiller et al. (1992) and Basch et al. (1994). Bryceson & Vuorela (2002) conceptualized transnational family life as social reproduction, which transcends nation states. Furthermore, they posited that transnational families are families whose members may be separated across borders but who actively preserve their sense of unity and kinship and secure the collective welfare of the family despite spatial separation and

dispersion. According to them, unlike other families, which are domiciled together, transnational families are more like 'imagined communities' with members who are unequal in terms of location, resources, lifestyles and mobility. Given these varying bases of familial inequality, it is not uncommon for family relations to be fraught with contention and conflict.

In the negotiation of various familial roles and social demands, family members and their families are exposed to opportunities and risks, including the reconfiguration of social norms regarding family life and relationships. Many studies suggest that migrants often leave children and other dependents behind when they migrate. However, despite physical separation, their sense of responsibility to the family does not diminish. In fact, Zentgraf & Chinchilla (2012) pointed out that many migrant family members seek to affirm their commitment by reorganizing and redefining conventional ways of performing familial roles such as motherhood and fatherhood. In doing so, they demonstrate that geographical proximity is not a requirement for the preservation of kinship bonds and the execution of familial duties.

2.2.2 Transnational Caregiving

Arlie Hochschild coined the term 'global care chain' to explain how employing migrant domestic care workers in the Global North created care deficits and care drain situations in the migrants' home countries in the South (Hochschild, 2000). The articulation of this theory was supported by Parreñas (2001) who further explained how 'care' as an economic commodity is transferred and traded internationally in the context of globalization. She asserted that domestic care workers should be viewed as 'servants of globalization' (p. 243). Grounded in the larger theory of the global value chain, the proponents of the global care chain analysis assert that social reproduction and the

provision of care is intimately linked to economic globalization and the international division of labour. For instance, Lutz & Palenga-Möllenbeck (2012) argued that some phenomena such as neoliberal globalization and the feminization of migration are directly associated with gender norms, the creation of transnational families and the dynamics of care arrangements.

The global care chain analysis highlights the commodification of care work and global inequalities as it relates to the socio-economic wellbeing of domestic care workers. It also draws the attention of global policy makers to the issue and creates a framework within which rights activists can advocate on behalf of disadvantaged domestic workers, particularly women. Yeates (2012) highlighted the imbalances along the global care chain and called for a more just regulation and global governance of the costs, risks and disruptions which are disproportionately borne by migrants and their families. While this analysis has garnered much attention in academic and policy circles, it still has many critics who argue that it does not adequately represent the realities in terms of domestic care work done by men and the institutionalized care work provided by professional doctors and nurses. They also criticize the analysis for overlooking local inequalities by focusing too much on the global domain (Parreñas, 2012; Raghuram, 2012). Another point of contention for many is the apparent underestimation of migrants' abilities and efforts to provide care despite seemingly insurmountable challenges (Boccagni, 2014; Zentgraf & Chinchilla, 2012).

Recent scholarship has sought to document and articulate a more nuanced view of transnational care work. Increasingly, focus has been placed on the domestic reproductive work of men, the care of elderly family members and the active role children play in the provision of care. This not only emphasizes how gender impacts on caregiving but also

demonstrates the necessity of caregiving across the generations. Some scholars have discussed the entrance of male workers in the domestic care industry. They showed how these male domestic caregivers navigate the social demands of masculinity by reaffirming and emphasizing their conventional roles as breadwinners and heads of the household (Bartolomei, 2010; Näre, 2010; Sar & Scrinzi, 2010). Sar (2010) also documented how global gender norms and structural factors exclude men from domestic care work in host countries, which remains as one of the few employment opportunities available to migrants from developing countries, particularly, undocumented migrants.

The documentation and discussion of the role that children play in providing (and receiving) care in the care chain has been emerging in current literature (see Lee & Pacini-Ketchabaw, 2011; Olwig, 2012). Previously, research on transnational caregiving focused on children as recipients - not providers - of care. On the other hand, much research has been done on the provision of transnational care to elderly family members and while they have mostly been framed as recipients, they have also been widely documented as providers of care, especially for children who remain behind in the home country when their migrant parents leave (see Baldassar & Baldock, 2000; Baldassar et. al., 2007; Izuhara & Shibata, 2002). As suggested in a Peruvian study of transnational families, which explored care across multiple generations (Leinaweaver, 2010), going forward, more studies may focus on how both children left behind and their grandparents take care of each other in the absence of migrant parents. These studies will then highlight the multiple roles/duties of individual family members.

2.2.3 Caring Roles in Transnational Families

Transnational parenthood including both motherhood and fatherhood is a more specific aspect of the broader phenomenon of transnational families. Transnational parenting is heavily gender-based. Dreby (2006) found that male and female economic migrants experience migration quite differently; both in terms of conditions in the host country and expectations back home. Moreover, although both fathers and mothers are required to send home money and other gifts and maintain regular communication, mothers have an extra requirement to provide emotional nurturance to their children (Parreñas, 2001, 2005; Ryan et al., 2009). Thus, unlike men, women are constrained by social expectations and obligations of caregiving, even when they are spatially separated from their children (Hondagneu-Sotelo & Avila, 1997; Parreñas, 2005).

Transnational Motherhood

Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo and Ernestine Avila first coined the term 'transnational motherhood' in their 1997 study of Mexican migrant women. According to them, the term refers to a situation where a woman migrates and leaves her child/children behind in her home country and as a result is forced to perform her role as mother across international borders (p. 548). Subsequently, the term was widely accepted and incorporated into transnational migration research.

Despite widespread gender norms which dictate that mothering necessarily involves physical care and nurturance, migrant mothers often decide to physically separate from their children in order to take care of their material needs (Falicov, 2005; Hondagneu-Sotelo & Avila, 1997; Parreñas, 2010). As a result, these mothers who are living overseas while their children remain in their home countries often face social criticisms of being 'bad mothers' (Bernhard, et al., 2005) and many suffer emotionally

due to peer pressure (Hondagneu-Sotelo & Avila, 1997). The concept of motherhood is based on a complex mix of interpersonal relationships, not just between a mother and her child, but also between the mother and the society or societies within which she experiences motherhood. Many studies on transnational motherhood explore how culturally-grounded gender norms create added social demands on migrant women. Conventional definitions of motherhood, which requires the physical presence of women in the nurturing of children, are often challenged (Illanes, 2010). Moreover, the growing economic challenges in developing countries are forcing mothers to seek employment outside the home and in many cases outside their home countries. Driven by the increasing opportunities for women's employment overseas (usually in developed countries like the US and Japan), many women are crossing international borders (often leaving their children behind) to take up these opportunities. Maher (2010) asserted that these migration systems reshape family life and reconfigure how children who are left behind are cared for. Due to the physical absence of the biological mother, 'other mothers' or 'substitute mothers' such as: grandmothers, aunts, elder female children, cousins, or other female family members and friends, must act as caregivers (Carling et al., 2012; Hondagneu-Sotelo & Avila, 1997; Illanes, 2010, p. 209; Parreñas, 2010).

The notion that 'good mothering' requires the physical presence of the mother seems to be a huge source of stress for many transnational mothers. Often, it is assumed that when a mother is physically separated from her child for an extended period, the mother-child bond is immediately - and perhaps permanently - damaged (Suurmond, 2010). Yet, transnational motherhood is far more complicated than the ideal of biological mothers physically nurturing their children. Some scholars have questioned the assumption of close mother-child bonds preceding migration (see Dreby, 2006; Horton,

2009; Parreñas, 2010; Illanes 2010). This has the potential of fostering myths about irresponsible mothers placing left behind children at risk; or worse, abandoning them. In an effort to respond to stigma and criticism and validate their roles as good mothers, migrant mothers vehemently distinguish transnational motherhood from estrangement, abandonment or disowning (Hondagneu-Sotelo & Avila, 1997, p. 557). Moreover, as research on Caribbean and Cape Verdean child fostering practices demonstrate, many public and academic discourses does not adequately recognise the role that extended family members play in providing care (Olwig, 2012; Åkesson et al., 2012).

Transnational mothers are finding new and alternative ways of caring for their children back home. Constant emotional and moral struggles compel migrant mothers to get involved in "intensive mothering" from afar by regularly communicating and sending home money and other gifts, which serve the dual purpose of expressing motherly love and meeting societal and normative expectations of what it means to be a good mother (Horton 2009; Parreñas, 2005, p. 123). Moral expectations regarding motherhood and the resultant self-sacrifice on the part of transnational mothers often limit their socio-economic wellbeing and assimilation in the host country, and in some cases, may lead to protracted poverty, even while they consistently send remittances to their home countries (Abrego, 2009). In the context of transnational mothers, the emotional requirements of motherhood is satisfied through letters, cards and technological mediums such as: emails, telephone calls and Skype (Yeoh & Huang, 2010). Madianou's (2012) ethnographic study of Filipino transnational mothers showed how they used their access to mobile telephones to actively participate in the daily lives of their children by monitoring their homework and meals, and keeping abreast with their academic success. Still, one cannot assume that enhanced communication technologies necessarily strengthen family ties because, as De

Bruijn, Brinkman & Nyamnjoh (2013) pointed out, access to these technologies can lead to arguments, grunges, avoidance and other forms of discontent and hostility among family members.

Transnational Fatherhood

Literature documenting and analysing transnational fathers, especially from a gender perspective, have been increasing recently. This may be due to the dearth of such analyses and/or in response to criticism from scholars like Pribilsky (2004) and Waters (2009), who highlighted the disproportionate focus on migrant mothers. They also pointed out that gender should not be interpreted to mean women only. Others have argued against the inappropriate framing of men as deviant and irresponsible, particularly as it relates to providing care, either after their own migration or after the migration of their female counterparts (Abrego, 2009; Alipio, 2013; Mazzucato & Schans, 2011).

Much of the studies on fatherhood in the context of transnational migration focus on the division of labour in the household. They reveal that fathers are usually somewhat reluctant to rearrange their household duties and reconfigure their paternal roles. They prefer to be household disciplinarians as opposed to emotional nurturers (Parreñas, 2008, 2010; Ryan et al., 2009). However, Pribilsky (2012) documented how Ecuadorian migrant fathers became more appreciative of the domestic work women do after they were forced to cook and clean for themselves after migration. They also felt that the migration experience had afforded them the freedom to transgress traditional gender norms related to masculinity. In their assessment of how fatherly roles are transformed in transnational families, Lutz & Palenga-Möllenbeck (2011) identified three strategies adopted by fathers whose female partners had migrated: sharing of care, withdrawing

from caring and single fathering. They reported that '…fathers to a large extent leave or delegate childcare to female relatives, particularly to grandmothers. By doing this, they adopted a strategy of sharing care work with female persons…or of transferring the entire care duties on them." (p. 21). In the same study, single fathers argued that their idea of manhood made them 'incompetent' with regards to providing emotional care.

An analysis of paternal abandonment has been done in many studies; even those that purport to focus on transnational motherhood and other aspects of transnational family life. These studies have revealed that socio-economic struggles and the immigration status of migrant fathers may explain why some fathers abandon their children (Abrego, 2009; Coe, 2011; Pribilsky, 2007). Paternal abandonment may also be linked to working conditions, which prevent migrant fathers from maintaining regular communication with their children and other kin. Some researchers have found that for various reasons, men are less likely to conform to gender expectations than women. They also found that men are more likely to abandon their children (Landolt & Da, 2005; Schmalzbauer, 2004). In their study, Landolt and Da (2005) found that when men stopped communication and remittances to their children back home, the reason was usually not economic hardship but rather, infidelity. Conversely, Dreby (2006, 2010) found that men's estrangement from their children was due to their inability to perform their economic role as provider. Hence, these men tend to disengage and re-engage in the future when their economic situation improves. Whatever the case, it seems that women are more likely to be socially sanctioned for not performing their expected roles. For instance, in a Cape Verdean study, Åkesson (2009) found that people were not surprised when transnational fathers abandoned their children but the same was not true for transnational mothers. Participation in the labour market and opportunities for employment are heavily

gender-based. Therefore, it is believed that gender also influences remittance behaviour. Men tend to have better paying and more secured jobs than women. However, Sørensen (2005) revealed that women's remittances are usually more consistent and disproportionately higher than men's. Abrego (2009) also found that Salvadoran transnational fathers remitted less money than transnational mothers.

Yet, even though men experience greater flexibility in terms of social expectations, it does not necessarily mean that they are not equally - or perhaps more - affected by spatial and temporal separation from their families. Asis (2002) pointed out that the impact of migration on fathers in transnational families remains under-researched. Despite this gap in research, we know that men's coping strategies tend to be more self-destructive. Research shows that men often resort to excessive alcohol consumption and womanizing to cope with their separation from their families and their inability to satisfy social standards of masculinity (Dreby, 2006; Schmalzbauer, 2005; Worby & Organista, 2007).

Notwithstanding the foregoing discussion, Fresnoza-Flot (2014) and Waters (2009) have reported that not only are men willing to take care of their children, but they are keen to provide care to their migrant spouses. Furthermore, some men desire to be more reliable fathers than their own fathers (Kilkey et al., 2014). In this study, the Polish men in London actively endeavoured to maintain their family ties and the remittance they sent home was not just economically important but had emotional value.

Transnational Childhood

Research and debates surrounding transnational families and the provision of care are usually focused on the children who are left behind and how the migration of their parent(s) affect(s) their wellbeing (Carling et al., 2012; Lutz & Palenga-Möllenbeck,

2011). Needless to say, the transnational movements and practices of parents do affect their children. Previously, research was overly fixated on viewing transnational children from the perspective of migrant parents (Mazzucato & Schans, 2011); more as passive subjects/victims of transnational processes and actors and less as active agents in their own lives. However, recent literature has featured children as central actors in transnational families. Whether or not reunification with their parents in the host country have been accomplished or they are still staying in the home country with one parent or other caregivers, children are key agents and operatives in the maintenance of transnational kinship bonds (Dreby & Adkins, 2012; Uehling, 2008).

The age of children in transnational families affect various aspects of their lives, whether in the public or domestic sphere (Carling et al., 2012). Age affects how children are treated politically regarding family reunification programmes and whether or not they can travel as unaccompanied minors (Bernhard et al., 2009; Uehling, 2008). In transnational households, it is not uncommon for elder siblings to be tasked with the responsibility of taking care of younger siblings in the absence of parents or other caregivers. The may also act as the hub among spatially dispersed transnational family members because of their abilities to use new communication technologies.

The impact of familial separation on the children left behind is also influenced by gender norms. Parreñas (2005) found that more responsibilities were given to girls as opposed to boys. For instance, girls who were old enough were entrusted with remittances and household financial management in the absence of the mother. Moreover, Moran-Taylor (2008) reported that if they were not monitored closely, girls were more likely to get involved in sexually promiscuous behaviours, which could lead to early motherhood.

Nevertheless, boys are perhaps equally vulnerable to negative influences such as involvement in gangs and other criminal-related activities (Smith, 2006).

The quality of caregiving arrangements is essential and the social relationships shared by the transnational parents and the designated caregivers back home is critical to secure the wellbeing of children in transnational families (Moran-Taylor, 2008). If the relationships with caregivers are not amicable, it creates tensions between the migrant parent(s), the caregiver and the child(ren) (Dreby, 2007; Haagsman & Mazzucato, 2014; Parreñas, 2008, 2010; Schmalzbauer, 2005). Indeed, Ryan (2011) contended that an analysis of these social relations must be a crucial part of any comprehensive study of transnational families in order to fully understand the development and maintenance of transnational ties.

There is a general assumption that when their parents migrate, children benefit economically and their access to better health and education increase. To some extent, this is true but several studies show that an improvement in the family's economic situation is not necessarily linked to an improvement in terms of human development indices, particularly as it relates to children (Dreby, 2007; Parreñas, 2008, 2010; Schmalzbauer, 2005). One must consider that the emotional struggles linked to transnational separation may have a severe negative impact on the health of children and on their academic performance (Kandel & Massey 2002). Nevertheless, remittances help to improve the wellbeing of children through the reduction of child labour and the strengthening of household finances which pay for healthcare, education and other expenses, which improve the general well-being of children who are left behind in the home country (Carling & Tønnessen, 2013).

When children migrate for the purpose of reuniting with their family members, usually parents, their adjustment to the new environment can be a challenge for both the child and the other family members (Phoenix & Seu, 2013). Children may not only experience 'culture shock' but may also be disappointed with their new living arrangements. Bonizzoni & Leonini (2013) pointed out that migrant children may have a desire to return to their previous setting because of a sense of deep loss of close relationships they had with friends and family members left behind in the home country. Furthermore, it is not uncommon for relationships between new migrant children and their parent(s) in the host country to be contentious due to new domestic rules and expectations. These expectations may be linked to familial divisions of labour. Migrant parents who work long and irregular hours may often ask their newly reunited children to take responsibility for the care of younger siblings (Lee & Pacini-Ketchabaw, 2011; Øien, 2010). These younger siblings may have been born in the host country (sometimes with another mother or father). These kinds of situations may cause tensions in family relationships but they also provide an opportunity for cultural values and practices from the home country to be passed on to younger generations. These interactions are vital towards creating and maintaining strong kinship ties, particularly for bringing second and third generation children into the transnational social fields of their parents and grandparents (Fouron & Glick Schiller, 2002; Levitt, 2009; Mand, 2010; Reynolds, 2006). This involvement of second and third generation children is also important when parents may want to temporarily send them to the home country due to disciplinary problems or for them to experience the home culture and be taught certain morals and values (Carling et al., 2012). In some cultures, children's involvement in transnational

social fields also become important when they need to find a marriage partner and start their own families later in life (Espiritu & Tran, 2002; Lievens, 1999; Timmerman, 2006).

Some migration scholars are now focusing on a relatively new area of research, which examines the impact of deportation on transnational family members. These studies underscore the fear experienced by children that they and/or their undocumented relatives will be deported. This sometimes leads to chronic stress and paranoia. Some researchers found that in comparison to the stresses associated with a child's initial migration, the possibility of sudden family disruption due to deportation causes much higher anxiety among children (Boehm, 2008; Dreby, 2012).

Elderly Care in Transnational Families

Recent studies on ageing and the wellbeing of older people, particularly in transnational families, have examined the intergenerational transfer and exchange of care in the context of migration. To elaborate the adaptation process undertaken by families to deal with the dispersion of family members due to migration, Douglass (2006: 423) deployed the term 'householding'. According to him, this term captures how the creation and sustenance of a household is a 'continuous process of social reproduction that covers all life-cycle stages and extends beyond the family.' In this process, elderly care and the care of other dependent household members feature prominently.

Gerontology studies usually frame ageing as somewhat problematic and burdensome for the family and/or the state. However, Maynard et al. (2008: 41) called for a 'post-gerontological' approach in order to 'explore difference and the ways in which different cultures and systems of belief give meaning to stages and conditions of life and how these meanings might contribute to well-being in old age'. Therefore, stereotypes

regarding ageing and elderly care are questioned and appropriately contextualised. To answer this call from Maynard et al., a deconstruction of the dichotomy between dependence and independence is necessary. In both academic and political circles, old age is viewed as the time when people lose their independence and need to be taken care of. Moreover, this dependence is constructed as negative and burdensome. This simplistic construction, grounded in Western individualism, does not adequately capture the reality in many cultures (such as the Philippines) where mutual interdependence across generations is highly valued (Bowlby et al. 2010).

2.3 Conclusion & Implications for this Study

The literature reviewed in the preceding sections demonstrate that much of the emerging work on transnational families are exciting and enlightening. However, there are still significant gaps in this scholarship. These include methodological but also conceptual challenges. Researchers still struggle in their efforts to properly conceptualize families that are separated by international borders. Like other transnational phenomena, transnational families exist in multiple national contexts, which presents challenges of 'methodological nationalism'. Consequently, related studies predominantly focus on geographically bounded subjects – family members living in a single location; and where transnational perspectives are adopted, the studies focus on one set of family members or the other. This excludes some members of the family and reveals only partial views of transnational family realities. Needless to say, more comprehensive studies are needed. Additionally, cultural norms regarding family life vary in different contexts. Hence, a balanced focus on both ends helps us to get an in-depth understanding of the customs and cultural norms that guide these family relationships.

Moreover, family studies stressed geographical proximity as a requirement for familial exchange and interaction. Consequently, family practices carried out across borders are assumed to be impossible or completely overlooked. Yet, the phenomenon of transnational families remains resilient. Therefore, it becomes necessary to investigate whether transnationality leads to a disintegration of families and if so, why. This understanding is lacking in studies which assume that the nuclear family who lives together in one place is the best model of family life.

It is true that some studies have revealed the close link between migration decisions and the economic needs or realities of the family. However, these studies have primarily focused on the economic effects of remittances without considering the non-economic aspects of these exchanges and how economics is closely linked with emotions and cultural values. It is also necessary to explore whether physical mobility of family members is linked to the socioeconomic mobility of transnational families.

Studies that interrogated issues related to gender and transnational family life have mostly included mothers and their children. However, these studies have not included analyses of other actors who provide care in the family network; whether biological or fictive kin. To get a comprehensive picture of transnational family life, it is critical that we include other kin members such as fathers and grandparents; as well as close friends and community members. Essentially, new units of analysis which extend beyond the nuclear family must be explored.

Finally, although the emerging literature has made significant contributions in documenting and analysing the issues involved in transnational family life, more work is needed to thoroughly understand the related issues and how families are affected. Some research questions are yet to be addressed. The questions raised by this study are among those that need further interrogation.

CHAPTER 3

Typologies of Caring Roles in Filipino Transnational Families

3.1 Introduction

To adequately understand the complexity of issues involved in providing transnational care, researchers have adopted numerous perspectives to theorize the plurality of transnational family types, and by extension, the typologies of roles played by these family members. Building on the theories and existing knowledge reviewed in the previous chapter, this chapter lays the groundwork for discussions I engage with in subsequent chapters. Here, I use a life course perspective to identify common roles played by Filipino transnational family members. Specifically, I look at how individual family members' age and stage of life affect who provides care, who receives care, what kind of care is provided and how that care is provided. A life course is defined as 'a sequence of socially defined events and roles that the individual enacts over time' (Giele & Elder, 1998, p. 22). This theoretical approach was developed in the 1960s to analyse the structural, social, and cultural contexts of people's lives. Hence, it interrogates the connection between individuals and the historical and socioeconomic contexts within which they exist or existed.

The key findings of this chapter are related to how Filipino transnational families exchange mutual care across borders and generations. It primarily focuses on the identification of specific caring roles at different life stages and reveals that stereotypical constructions of fathers, children and grandparents as dependent, incapable and resistant to providing certain types of care are no longer accurate and must be re-examined and appropriately conceptualized. This chapter highlights the active role played by individual family members in the family's care network, regardless of age and gender.

The chapter is organized into four sections. Based on empirical data, in Sections 3.2 and 3.3, I present eight typologies of caring roles and discuss how they affect and are affected by care circulation. Organized under two broad categories (childhood and adulthood), these role typologies include: dependent child, resourceful/helpful adolescent child, sacrificial mother, breadwinner father, nurturing father, caring adult child, dependable grandparents and supportive kin. Section 3.4 concludes the chapter.

3.2 Childhood

3.2.3 Dependent Child

Children, particularly younger ones, are generally viewed as helpless, unequipped and in need of guidance and care. The focus at this stage is constant attention, intensive nurturance/emotional care and total economic dependence on adults. No doubt, care must be provided on a daily basis. Because of the intense and hands-on nature of the care required at this stage of the life course, parents, particular mothers, experience greater scrutiny when they cannot be physically present with their child/children. Children like Paulo (aged 9) and Chris (aged 10) are at this stage. Paulo lives with his maternal grandmother and is regularly visited by his father who lives nearby. Both parents financially support him but his mother's remittances are what cover most of his expenses, which are managed by his grandmother. Chris also lives with his maternal grandmother but he visits his father's family from time to time. Financially, both parents equally support him. Both boys communicate frequently with their parents by Skype and telephone calls. During these sessions, the main focus is on affirming love and affection and confirming that the boys are being respectful to their grandmothers and other elders.

Paulo said:

My grandmother takes care of me because my mother is working overseas and she sends many nice things for us. I love her and I love my Lola too!

Chris said:

My mother and father are over there in Japan. I think they have a beautiful life because they can travel and live in a nice country like Japan. I would like to live there too one day. I think they will send for me soon.

Chris' statement implies that children at this stage may not really understand why they are separated from their parents and what exactly their parents are doing overseas. As Bushin (2009) highlighted, children's role in transnational care relationships and their scope for agency are affected by their cognitive development. Moreover, their age is key in their understanding of their role and care arrangements at this stage.

3.2.4 Resourceful/Helpful Adolescent Child

As young children get older and become adolescents, they gain a deeper understanding of their social settings and their family's migration projects. In addition, while they are still largely financially dependent on their parents or older family members, they also become resource persons in the provision of various forms of care including emotional/moral, personal/nurturance and practical support. For example, Kristina's (aged 17) father has been migrating for as long as she can remember. He has worked as a seafarer and also a construction worker in Saudi Arabia. Now, he works in Japan as a factory worker. Kristina helps to take care of her two younger siblings because her mother is also a circular migrant to Singapore where she works as a domestic helper. She is the one who receives the remittances from her parents and makes major decisions regarding

allocation of resources in her household. This concurs with Parreñas' (2005) finding that girls are sometimes expected to take care of younger siblings and engage in household management. A caveat, though, is that Kristina is closely monitored by extended family members and her mother often gives strict instructions and sends detailed text messages. Her mother also does video calls periodically and when there is an emergency.

Another child, Julius (aged 16), lives with his paternal aunt and her family. His grandfather also lives in that household and Julius helps to take care of him. Because of his interest in Biology and his dream of becoming a doctor, he takes pleasure in administering his grandfather's medicine and visiting the pharmacy to buy prescribed medicines. He related: "I enjoy doing it. I love to check his blood pressure and blood glucose. It is good training for my future and I can take care of my grandfather". Julius also worries about his mother's wellbeing and whether she is eating properly and getting enough rest. Whenever he talks to her, he reminds her to take care of herself and not to worry about him. As a gesture of appreciation for the sacrifice of his parents, he studies very hard and is diligent with his schoolwork. This demonstrates that in addition to the practical care that Julius gives to his grandfather, he also provides emotional care to his migrant mother. Furthermore, his diligence in school is a form of symbolic care, which he offers in exchange for the care he receives from his parents and other extended family members.

Unlike the previous type of children, parental concerns at this stage go beyond health, nurturing and schooling to focus also on discipline and the prevention of social deviance. Bonizzoni and Boccagni (2014) pointed out that adolescent children of migrant parents often force families to rethink and renegotiate their care arrangements. Simon's case demonstrates this. Simon is sixteen years old and has generally managed to stay out

of trouble. However, since both parents migrated five years ago (his mother went to Japan and his father went to Abu Dhabi), he has had some disciplinary problems at school including alleged drug use. His grandparents whom he lives with have not been able to adequately deal with his problems. As a result, his mother is seriously considering terminating her employment and returning to the Philippines to deal with the problem before it gets worse. Here, we see that children are not always resourceful and helpful but can sometimes disrupt the livelihood strategies of the family. Nevertheless, in this study, the majority of children were demonstratively resourceful by helping with mundane tasks like cleaning, running errands and troubleshooting technological problems during transnational calls or video chats.

3.3 Adulthood

4.6.3 Sacrificial Mother

Studies on transnational caregiving and the physical separation of family members often apply a gender-based analysis and when the migrant is a female, especially a mother, a discourse of abandonment and adverse effects on family life usually ensues. To counter this narrative and somehow justify their migration, migrant mothers often tell stories of hardships and sacrifice for the benefit of their children and extended family members.

In this study, all twenty-two mothers (young adults and middle-aged adults) identified as sacrificial mothers. This identity was even more pronounced for those mothers who had irregular migration statuses and/or were from low socio-economic backgrounds. Marianne (aged 39) has been living in Japan for the last fourteen years and

left her two children in the Philippines with her mother. She initially migrated to Japan as an entertainment worker/hostess in a bar and subsequently has been working as a domestic caregiver. She describes a life of severe poverty and lack of opportunities before her migration. According to her, she migrated to ensure that her children could get a good education to secure a better future. She also highlighted that she did not get much help from the children's father. She told me:

> *I didn't have a choice. My children were growing up. I could not earn enough money to take care of them and their father is not a good man. I was working three jobs and it was still not enough. I was a merchandiser and a washer lady. I also sold snacks at a nearby school. Can you believe it?*

While this narrative suggests that poverty and lack of opportunities usually necessitate sacrificial migration on the part of mothers, Luisa (36), who is relatively wealthier and who had a project management job with the Philippine government, also asserted that her migration to pursue a master's degree at a Japanese university was also an act of sacrifice for the betterment of her child. Luisa told me:

> *Yes, of course it was a sacrifice. Many people think you have to be poor to make a sacrifice when you migrate but that's really not true. After I complete my studies here [in Japan] and return to the Philippines, I am sure that I can get a promotion or find a better job. It is not easy to be separated from my child; he is so young. But I do it for his future.*

These narratives show that even with very different socioeconomic and immigration statuses, migrant mothers, more often than not, invoke a discourse of sacrifice and identify as sacrificial mothers.

4.6.4 Breadwinner Father

Unlike mothers, father's migration is generally not perceived as a disruption in family life and a cause for alarm. Indeed, it is seen as a natural expansion of their caregiving role, that of breadwinning. As many studies have shown, this is grounded in socially constructed norms, meanings and practices of care in various parts of the world including the Philippines (see Parreñas 2008).

Samuel (aged 42) is a middle-aged father of two girls whom he left behind in the Philippines with his wife who is an office worker. He has been living in Japan for four years and religiously remits money to his wife to take care of the household expenses. While he sometimes sends packages with friends who are visiting the Philippines, he has not yet visited his family since he migrated. When asked about this, he responded that he does not earn enough money to afford a visit. Furthermore, he asserted that it is more important to send money for the family because that is his duty. Samuel said:

> *I am sure that my children are getting enough care. My wife is there so it's fine. I just need to make sure she has money for their food, bills and the children's schooling. I am the man; I am supposed to go out and find the money wherever it is.*

However, breadwinner fathers are not just those who migrate. Even those fathers who are left behind in the Philippines sacredly guard their roles as breadwinners. Manuel's (aged 35) female partner migrated to Japan three years ago. Their son now lives with Manuel's elder sister and although his son's mother regularly sends money (sometimes to him and other times to his sister), he makes a significant effort to contribute to his son's expenses. He also tells how he was the one who paid for his partner's migration expenses and financially supported her when she had just arrived in Japan.

Although Manuel knows that his partner's remittances are enough to take care of the household expenses, he continues to actively contribute financially. Perhaps, as Fresnoza-Flot (2014) also found, he does this to reaffirm his manhood and conform to gendered expectations of masculinity.

4.6.5 Nurturing Father

In dominant discourses regarding family life, the role of fathers usually relates to breadwinning. However, in this study, fathers (both those left behind in the Philippines and those in Japan) were keen to provide nurturance to their children and other family members. Reynaldo (aged 43), for instance, has been the primary care giver for his two children (aged 10 and 12) since his wife migrated to Japan four years ago. While his wife's sister sometimes assists him, he is usually the one who does the daily cooking, cleaning and other household chores. Reynaldo also considers discipline as a part of his nurturing role, although he is careful not to alienate the children. According to him, he sees the absence of his wife as an opportunity to bond with his children. Reynaldo told me:

> *Since my wife migrated, I became closer with my children. We spend a lot of time together and I am always playing with them. Before, I didn't have much time because I was always working. Now that my wife is away, I spend more time in the house.*

He also said:

> *Discipline? Yes, I discipline them but I try not to be too strict. I don't want to be a scary father. I want them to have good manners but I also want them to see me as a good, loving father.*

We see that Reynaldo takes his nurturing role seriously and is careful to ensure that he performs this role properly.

Hideki (aged 40), a Japanese man who is married to a Filipina, is also a nurturing father. Because of the health of his mother-in-law in the Philippines, his wife is often required to return to the Philippines to take care of her. During these trips, which could last up to two months, Hideki takes care of their eight-year-old son. The care he provides is by no means limited to breadwinning and includes various forms of emotional and reproductive care such as bathing his son, cleaning the house, preparing meals and comforting his son when he cries for his mother. This kind of care is 'abnormal' for Hideki but he has since adjusted to it and takes pride in being able to take care of his son. He told me:

> *Yea. It's difficult. It's not so normal for Japanese men to do this. But, you know, I am married to a Filipina so I am already different. At first, it was difficult but now I am already used to it. I enjoy doing it.*

These narratives show that fathers in transnational families are surpassing the normative understanding of their roles as breadwinners. They have demonstrated their willingness to perform caregiving tasks, which are necessary for the social reproduction of the family and the wellbeing of its members.

4.6.6 Caring Adult Child

More and more studies are finding that people of all ages are migrating as a part of a wider family livelihood strategy as opposed to a personal agenda. Moreover, elderly parents in the Philippines support the migration of their children as they hope it will enhance the economic prosperity of the family and act as a form of insurance policy for them if they become sick or need financial help. Beyond the material wellbeing of their

own children, many migrants, both male and female, consider the care of their elderly parents as important and make efforts to send remittances to cover medical costs and pay for institutionalized care when necessary. In Anna's family, she is the eldest daughter (aged 48) and while she also has two sisters who have migrated to the USA and Hong Kong, she is the one who pays most of the medical and household bills of her elderly parents. Her sister who lives in the Philippines provides the hands-on daily care needed by their parents while her other sister who is a nurse in the USA helps to make the major decisions regarding what kind of medical care is needed and the best institutional providers. Here, we see that these sisters provide various forms of care to their parents based on their spatial realities and their varying endowments of resources.

Another transnational family member, Raymond (aged 37), lives in Manila and often helps his sister to take care of their elderly father; unfortunately, their mother already passed away. He runs errands for the family and helps to drive his father to his doctor appointments. He is also the one who receives and manages the remittances from his brother who lives in Japan.

4.6.7   Dependable Grandparent

As demonstrated in the description of the 'caring adult child', one of the dominant perceptions regarding elderly members of transnational families is that, like young children, they are dependent on others around them to provide care. In my study, I found this to be true, to an extent, although it depends on their age and state of health. In the Philippines, like many other places where childbearing starts early, sometimes unplanned, grandparents can be relatively young and healthy. This challenges long-established normative constructions of grandparents as old, helpless and in need of intensive care.

Carmela (aged 52) has two grandchildren who have been living with her since their mother (her daughter) migrated to Japan and their father to Dubai. Other than occasional visits to the doctor due to her hypertension problem, she is healthy and active. She is able to take care of the daily needs of the children and even plays with them regularly. Carmela sees this as her role in the family project and takes pride in being able to do it. When she does not receive remittances on time, she uses her own money to take care of the children. She jokes that, perhaps, she is better equipped to take care of the children.
Carmela said:

> *Nowadays these young people don't know how to take care of children. They are better off when they are with me. I will take care of them better than their parents. I know more about life than they do. Who is better to take care of them?*

Even though Carmela's child-raising days are over, she is still zealous about raising her grandchildren.

Another grandmother, Georgina (aged 49), has been living in Japan for more than twenty years since she migrated in the late 1990s as an entertainment worker. Once an undocumented migrant, she has been able to regularize her immigration status by marrying a Japanese man. As a result, Georgina is able to visit the Philippines whenever her children and grandchildren need her. In fact, she was there for the birth of her first grandchild and when her son's wife was sick and could not take care of her baby. In addition, Georgina's relatively good socioeconomic status affords her the ability to support her adult children if they have financial problems or other emergencies.

These narratives show that grandparents are not just dependent recipients of care; rather, they are resourceful and active participants in 'circuits of care' based on reciprocity and continuous investing in social capital, which becomes useful later in life.

4.6.8   Supportive Kin

Other than young children and elderly parents, members of transnational families often support other family members and kin. As we have seen in Chapter 2, 'care' can be broadly conceptualised to include 'a range of activities to promote and maintain the personal [and collective] health and welfare of people' (Yeates 2009: 5). These include 'cooking, cleaning, shopping and general maintenance work' as well as 'income-generating activities'. From this perspective, most, if not all, regular activities carried out by family members and extended kin constitute the provision of care.

In my study, most respondents spoke of the care they provided to their immediate family members, primarily husband/wife (or romantic partner), children and parents. However, there were narratives of care exchanged with extended kin and even non-kin. By non-kin, I mean those whose relations are not based on consanguinity. Although, Widner (2010) cautioned us to not exclude friends and other close associates from discussions of transnational care exchange because even if they are not blood relations, they still share strong affinities and may be perceived as family.

Eva (aged 32) could be identified as supportive kin by virtue of the care she provides to her extended family members. After graduating from nursing school, she worked as a nurse in the Philippines before migrating to Japan as a care worker under the Japan Philippine Economic Partnership Agreement (JPEPA). Eva regularly sends remittances to her uncle in the Philippines to help with her cousin's university tuition and her uncle's medical bills. Since she is a medical professional, she is also able to advise her uncle regarding his health.

Miguel (aged 37), while not a migrant, financially supports his sister who is studying in Japan as well as his nephew whose mother migrated to Abu Dhabi two years

ago. His nephew sometimes stays with him and his wife in Manila. Miguel also provides financial assistance to an elderly lady in Manila who, he says, helped to raise him when his biological parents migrated in the past. He appreciates the care given to him by this woman and considers her to be as close to him as his own mother. He therefore feels a sense of obligation to help take care of her. In addition to the economic care he provides, he often spends time with her and drives her to the doctor when she has an appointment.

3.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have explored the concept of caregiving in Filipino transnational families from a life course perspective. Focusing on different stages of the life cycle, I identified eight types of role identities among transnational family members. These include: dependent child, resourceful/helpful adolescent child, sacrificial mother, breadwinner father, nurturing father, caring adult child, dependable grandparents and supportive kin. While some of these roles confirm to normative constructions, others give a new perspective on the changing dynamics of transnational family life, particularly as it relates to the exchange of care. For instance, contrary to previous studies which focus on only women as caregivers and frame men, children and grandparents as dependent, incapable and resistant to providing certain types of care, this chapter highlights the willingness and ability of these actors to perform a wide variety of care. This shows that caregiving in Filipino transnational families is flexible and links various family members in a web of material, emotional and symbolic exchanges. Care work, then, moves out of the realm of 'women's work' to include the contributions of other family members, irrespective of age or gender. This chapter showed evidence of men who provide nurturance in addition to financial support. Also, stories of mutual care between grandparents and their

grandchildren are shared to give a full picture of how care circulates across generations in Filipino transnational families.

Moreover, the chapter revealed that transnational family practices change over time given the family's contextual situation. Particularly, family obligations, needs and abilities to provide care are shaped by the realities of different life stages. Therefore, migration and the exchange of different types of care must be seen not as significant moments in time but rather as dynamic processes taking place across the life course. Against this background, individual family members and the role they play in the family's care network, regardless of age, are brought to the fore and appropriately recognized. Also highlighted are the challenges and constraints encountered in the provision of care.

CHAPTER 4

Careful Symbolism:
Materialism, Remittances & Affections in Filipino Transnational Families in Japan

4.1 Introduction

Consumerism and a global culture of hyper consumption have driven increased desires for the acquisition of goods and services, even beyond necessity. Moreover, we now live in a world where personal and collective values, social statuses and activities are based on the consumption of goods and services. In fact, a core component of contemporary life is the emulation of those who are perceived to be materially superior in the socioeconomic hierarchy. Given current trends in global inequalities, it is unsurprising that longstanding migration streams from the Philippines to Japan have been sustained. Schmalzbauer (2004) pointed out that parents generally migrate in order to improve their economic situation in the home country; they aim to provide economic and material comfort for their children and extended family members. These migrants often send remittances and/or packages back to their home countries. Moreover, many studies have documented how they use the material gains from their migration to justify and cope with separation from their families.

The World Bank (2019) reported that, in 2018, remittances to low and middle-income countries like the Philippines were considerably larger than foreign direct investments (FDIs), reaching $462 billion compared to $344 billion in FDIs. Among the top recipients, the Philippines ranked fourth, with $34 billion, behind India, China and Mexico. The bank

projected an increase in the coming years, considering the plan to deploy more workers to Japan (De Vera, 2019).

There is a dominant view that economics and emotions are constitutively different and should, therefore, be dealt with in separate realms. Hence, the saying 'money can't buy you love' is often easily accepted as an undisputable truth. Accordingly, any mention of money and the economic value of a gift or commodity is often frown upon because that love and/or care would be seen as fake or superficial.

In this chapter, I question the veracity of that proposition by interrogating how Filipino transnational families circulate love and care through material exchanges and economic transactions. Specifically, to elaborate a deeper and more nuanced understanding, I show how and why the Filipino traditions of gift-giving and the sending of balikbayan boxes, as well as the building and/or acquisition of real estate, are closely linked to the creation, embodiment and maintenance of familial ties and belonging, despite geographical dispersion. Essentially, this chapter demonstrates an alternative understanding of how love and care are expressed in these families and how such expressions are grounded in local cultures of relatedness.

The chapter is organized into seven sections. Following this introduction, Section 4.2 discusses how financial remittances are used to express affection and perform reproductive roles across borders. It also elaborates how affection changes based on the intensity of remittances. Next, Section 4.3 unpacks the symbolic value of material gifts and balikbayan boxes; and explain how the value of these packages have led to political action and a broader recognition of the diaspora's will to share their material existence with their families back home. The subsequent section details how the construction of houses (or additional rooms) and the acquisition of property signifies a deep sense of belonging and care. Section 4.5 discusses how symbolic gestures and signals can be misconstrued if migrants do not show careful efforts.

Preceding the conclusion, 4.6 balances the discussion by elaborating how economic exchanges regarding the sending and receiving of remittances can become contentious and result in resentment, rivalry and familial conflict.

4.2 Affective Remittances

Many studies have shown that economic exchanges and global inequality are tightly linked to the expression and circulation of love and care within families that are affected by transnational migration. Remittances (both cash and kind) sent to family members back home are not just economic transactions; they possess material, emotional and symbolic value (Carling, 2014). Tensions arising from extended separation of parents, primarily mothers, from their children often prompt them to send material gifts and remittances as a strategy of mothering from a distance. Horton (2009) found that sending toys, clothes and personal gadgets were a source of pride for Salvadorian transnational mothers. In my study, I found that Filipinas in Japan who had left children behind in the Philippines were equally excited and proud to be able to send the gifts their children had requested. Beaming with pride, Rose (aged 36) told me that:

> It's the best thing for me. I can send almost anything they ask for. Sometimes I send clothes, shoes, jewelry, perfume, cell phone; anything they want. But they never ask for books [laughs]. They should study too. Right? Anyways, they are still children. They just want to have nice things! Wait, you know even my sisters and aunt, they ask for same things. They are like my children too. Aren't they? [laughs]

Rose is delighted to send gifts, not just to her children but also to her siblings and extended family. In fact, just a week before our conversation, she had shipped two large packages

containing personal items and a new LCD TV which her family back home had requested and was looking forward to receiving.

Rose explained that she appreciates the efforts of her sister and aunt in taking care of her two daughters. Even though she is often lonely and misses them, she is confident that they are not being abused or neglected and that they are getting proper moral guidance since her chosen caregivers are practicing Catholics. According to her, in exchange for their 'sacrifice', she ensures that she consistently remits money to them and whenever they request anything, she sends it as soon as possible. The money sent is not just for the daily expenses of the children but also to help Rose's aunt who is not currently employed. Here, we see that Rose is engaged in an economic exchange by financially compensating her children's caregivers. However, the act of remitting money and other tangible goods gives her a feeling of involvement in the care of her children (similar to what was found in Fresnoza-Flot, 2009; Parreñas, 2005; Zentgraf & Chinchilla, 2012). Moreover, I argue that her remittances are symbolic acts of emotional exchange: signals of love, appreciation and solidarity.

Remittances and material gifts also send messages regarding a migrant's priorities and commitments. When remittances are consistent, it is perceived that the migrant has not forgotten those left behind and that he/she is still committed to the family. Conversely, inconsistency, a decline in remittances or, as I found, the inability to grant certain requests, may have negative implications for the relationship between the migrant and the caregiver; and sometimes, between migrant parents and their children (Carling et al., 2012; Dreby, 2006; Pribilsky, 2004). In the Philippines, mothers are expected to provide emotional intimacy and domestic care work while fathers are expected to be economic providers. However, in a context of highly feminized migration, women's role is now extended to include breadwinning. These gendered expectations have far-reaching implications for how a migrant's actions are

interpreted. Christie (aged 27), reflecting on her childhood, said that she was sometimes upset at her mother when she did not receive the gifts she requested. At that time, she thought that since her mother was working in Japan, she should be able to send her the things she wanted. Back then, she interpreted that as a reduction in her mother's love and care because of extended separation. Interestingly, while her father was living close to where she stayed with her maternal grandmother, he did not provide much emotional or material care to her. However, despite the limited care she received from him, she did not feel anger or acrimony towards him even as she resented her migrant mother.

Christie's mother Cecilia (aged 52), who still lives in Japan, told me that given her limited income at that time, her focus was to ensure that her daughter was always prepared for school and that she had all the materials she needed. Essentially, she prioritized her daughter's education instead of showering her with what she called "unnecessary material goods". When I questioned whether she was worried that her daughter would be angry at her, she responded:

Of course. But I didn't want her to fall in love with material things. That's not important. I wanted her to work hard in school so that she could be something better than me. That's why I made sure she had her school things. But, of course, I sent some nice [material] things for her too, especially during the holidays. If not, she would think I'm not a sweet mom.

Cecilia did not want her daughter to subscribe to a materialistic culture but she also recognized the symbolic importance of sending material gifts. In other cases, children also articulated a desire for physical presence and intimacy but are willing to accept commodities as a symbol of affection. For instance, Benjamin (aged 15) said that he wishes that his mother was still living with them in the Philippines. Sometimes he cries at night when he comes home from school and she is not there. However, according to him:

I know my mom loves me because she makes sure we have everything. We never have to beg or borrow something from our neighbours anymore. Whenever she asks for something she tries to give it to me. My lola [grandmother] also asks for some things [furniture and electronics] for our home and she sent money for us. We went to the store to get it.

Benjamin also understands that his mother does not have an unlimited source of money and that she needs to work very hard to take care of them. Therefore, he tempers his desire to make frequent or expensive requests of her. Benjamin's conscious effort at reducing the burden on his mother is a sign that he recognizes the affective value of the commodities he and his grandmother receive from his mother, and in return he also provides symbolic care by his gracious attitude.

To a large extent, care is expressed by providing the necessities of life such as food, clothing and shelter. However, as I found in this study, the granting of requests for 'unnecessary' things is an enormous gesture of transnational love and care. Moreover, the readiness of the giver to give and the comfort and sense of freedom of the receiver to request the gift must be interpreted as a sign of mutual care. The Filipino families I studied understood the sharing of material resources (especially if they are limited) as emotional closeness. Therefore, it seems that the readiness to share one's resources (even if limited) seems to be more important than the absolute ability to provide those resources. The provision of goods deemed to be outside the realm of necessities would imply a large endowment of resources, particularly financial. This perspective has implications for those family members who are perceived to have more resources, usually those who have migrated. However, as Coe (2011) implied, both children and adults who are left behind seem to have a fine-tuned calculus that helps them to discern the ability of their migrant family members abroad to grant certain

requests or provide certain resources. In fact, I found that adult caregivers are critical in grooming children by explaining the challenges of being a migrant and the sacrifices being made abroad by their parents. This is why Benjamin consciously moderates his demands and requests. Although his mother often tells him about her challenges living and working in Japan, it is the constant reinforcement from his grandmother that helps him to grasp the significance of his mother's sacrifices. He said that he constantly hears his grandmother's voice in his head saying:

> *You see, your mom is over there [in Japan] working really hard. It's tough but she doesn't give up. Sometimes I wonder if she has enough for herself but still, she provides for us. You know you must study hard. You have to take care of her in the future. That's your responsibility.*

The idea that Benjamin and other left-behind children are obligated to take care of their parents in the future and somehow repay a debt is grounded in a Filipino belief of *utang na loob*, which translates as *"debt of gratitude"* or *"debt of one's inner self"*. The essence of this belief or consciousness is that a person is expected to reciprocate a favour which is impossible to quantify and, therefore, possesses immeasurable value. De Guida (2005) elucidated that *utang na loob* originates in a culture of shared selves and personhood, a core tenet of what it means to be Filipino. Even if these children are not expected to repay a financial debt, as Coe (2011) found, many children in my study promised to remember their caregivers when they got old. Moreover, even though they did not indicate that they would be available to provide daily personal care, they pledged to provide financial resources to pay for that care. This reveals the extent to which financial and material provisions are closely linked to practical and emotional care.

4.3 Unpacking Care

The Filipino culture has a long history of gift-giving characterized by the exchange of material goods, money and the expression of goodwill. Increased migration from the Philippines has made this practice of gift-giving more pronounced. As Filipino migrants in Japan become more economically stable, they are able to engage in these exchanges to a greater extent. Migrants' gifts signify their upward social mobility, their remembrance of and commitment to those left behind in the Philippines; and their existence as a member of the family and the community. The sending of balikbayan boxes to the Philippines is a common practice among the Filipino migrants I studied. In August 2015, the Finance Secretary of the Philippine said that about 1,500 containers of balikbayan boxes per month are shipped to the country. This translate to approximately 18,000 containers or 7.2 million packages per year (De Vera 2015). Balikbayan boxes are usually large cardboard boxes that Filipinos send to their families in the Philippines. They contain various goods such as food items, clothes, toys, appliances or other things requested by family members or which the migrant deems necessary for the comfort and daily existence of family members back home. The boxes are typically bought and filled throughout the year, and as Christmas, Easter or other special holidays approach, they are shipped. Similar to Latin American and Caribbean migrants, Filipinos often send these boxes to coincide with the start of the school year (see McCallum, 2018).

For many overseas Filipinos, including those I studied, the sending of balikbayan boxes is the best way to bridge the physical and emotional distance with family members back home. Rose (aged 36), whom I introduced earlier, considers the preparation of her 'care packages' as one of the most important things that she does all year round. According to her, as soon as she sends off a package, she is already preparing for the next shipment. She said:

Sending those things are important. Sometimes I don't even know if they need them but I send them anyways. They can give it to some friends if they don't need it. I just prepare the boxes and send them. This is the Filipino way; we send boxes. It's in our blood. It shows our feelings, our love…everything!

Rose's declaration that sending balikbayan boxes is the Filipino way has some credence. Filipinos overseas have always sent packages but this practice was formalized by a government initiative to encourage returning Filipinos *(balikbayans)* to contribute to the local economy not only by sending back things but also visiting and spending the money they earned overseas. The aim was also to recognize and applaud the contribution and sacrifices of Filipinos in the diaspora. This initiative included reduced airfares, hotel discounts, tax breaks and, of key importance, significant reductions in baggage restrictions. This meant that *balikbayans[2]* could bring many gifts for their family members and friends when they returned or visited. However, because of extended stays abroad, many overseas Filipinos resorted to sending the boxes even if they could visit. These packages then became the most enduring symbol of family members and friends who were overseas. Indeed, they became embodiments of those absent members. By sending these packages, migrants share small pieces of their lives abroad.

The significance of these care packages goes far beyond the economic value of the products they contain, which sometimes can reach exorbitant levels if products like brand-name handbags, electronics and jewelry, among other expensive goods, are included. In light of the tax breaks and greater freedom in the customs clearance of packages sent by Filipinos overseas, it was alleged that unscrupulous persons were using balikbayan boxes to smuggle contraband and commercial items while avoiding taxes (De Vera, 2015). As a result, the Philippine government intensified the inspection of balikbayan boxes. Some packages were even opened

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[2] *The term 'balikbayan' refers to a Filipino person who is visiting or permanently returning to the Philippines after a period of living overseas, whether for work, study or other more extended/permanent stays.*

during inspection. This led to great disgruntlement in the Filipino diaspora and among family members and friends in the Philippines. Some complained that pilferage and mishandling were taking place during the inspections. This discontent came to a head in 2015 when the then Customs Commissioner, Albert Lina, declared that all balikbayan boxes would be opened for inspection and additional taxes would be imposed. Due to increased pressure from the Filipino diaspora and local lobbyists, the Philippine Senate was forced to conduct an inquiry. This led to the passage of the Customs Modernization Act, including the Balikbayan Box Law, which sought to protect the packages by establishing strict penalties against customs officers who preyed on balikbayan boxes (Ramos-Araneta; 2016). Moreover, President Aquino emphasized that *"OFW (overseas Filipino workers) families view the balikbayan box as an integral part of the family relationship to nurture loved ones at home and as a tangible sign of their love and concern for their family members"* (De Vera, 2015).

Marjorie (aged 41) was one of those Filipinos in Japan who was affected by the inspection of balikbayan boxes. She had just sent two packages to the Philippines when the announcement was made by the commissioner in 2015. According to her, she was particularly concerned because of previous experiences of having her goods damaged and stolen after her packages were opened. It was that anxiety that led her to collaborate with other members of the diaspora to lobby the Philippine government (mostly by social media) and encourage family members and friends back home to raise their voices against the proposed plans. Interestingly, Marjorie's unease was not primarily because of the material value of the products that had been either stolen or damaged. Marjorie was driven by a deeper sentiment of personal and familial violation. By opening her packages, she felt that the Philippine state and the inspectors had somehow desecrated the familial bond and connection that was embodied in the boxes. She said:

I felt violated. It was like they opened our front door and walked into our home. And then our things were stolen and some things were damaged. My heart was just bleeding with sadness. Those things were for my boy's schooling and some medicines for my mom and ninang [godmother]. How can they do that? I am really sad and angry about that.

Her analogy of her family home being violated and her framing of the damaged and stolen goods as 'our things' shows that these packages are not just filled with material goods but are loaded with sentiments that testify to the bonds that exist within Filipino transnational families. During my fieldwork, migrants and their family members often referred to the balikbayan boxes as *'door-to-door'*. Beyond a reference to the logistical nature of the service provided by delivery companies, I argue that *'door-to-door'* has a deeper meaning. It symbolizes an unbroken link of geographically-divided households which are sentimentally connected, so that packages moving from one door to the next reveals an interlocking of existences and lived experiences.

The sentimental value of packages can vary depending on the immigration status of the migrants they come from. Migrants who are undocumented (like some of my respondents) are unable to visit the Philippines freely so the packages they send possess greater significance and value. Because of their restricted mobility, they cannot visit and take a *'pasalubong [souvenir]'* so they often resort to sending a *'padala'* such as money or small gifts like perfume, clothes, jewelry, chocolates and Japanese ramen with a friend, co-worker or family member who is visiting the Philippines. Migrants also send things that are not available or very expensive in the Philippines. Of course, rare products have a greater perceived value. Like *omiyage*[3] in Japan, the exchange of these small gifts goes a long way in sustaining social relations not just between dispersed family members but also among fellow members of the Filipino diaspora in

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[3] *An 'omiyage' is a gift or souvenir given to friends, co-workers and/or family members after returning home from a trip, whether local or international. The giving and receiving of 'omiyage' is an important part of Japanese gift-giving customs. These exchanges are steeped in social protocols and anyone who takes a trip is expected to have an omiyage upon return.*

Japan. Indeed, the person who takes the gift to the Philippines is in a difficult position because, to the extent that they are required to sacrifice their limited baggage allowance, they are forced to produce emotional care to their fellow migrants and their families back home. Despite this enormous sacrifice, it is virtually impossible to refuse the request of a compatriot, especially if he/she is undocumented and cannot easily visit the Philippines. Tilly (2007) also found similar transnational practices and sentiments among Latin American and Caribbean migrants in the US who typically send money, small gifts or even household appliances with colleagues who are taking a trip home.

As the duration of separation is extended, migrants (particularly those who are undocumented) can lose their sense of consumer demands and trends in the Philippines. They may no longer know the preferences of their family members back home. We saw in Rose's narrative that even though sending things is important, she is not fully aware of the things they want. Migrants like Rose who are not sure what their family members desire adopt various strategies. One way is to send money gifts, in which case family members can personally choose what products to buy and they can also access those products much faster than waiting for balikbayan boxes to be delivered. However, these money gifts go further than practical convenience. For the family members in the Philippines, it is interpreted as trust and goodwill because the sender in Japan has entrusted them to properly spend their hard-earned money. Benjamin's grandmother is the one who receives the remittances from his mother but whenever he requests personal items or extra money to do something special with friends, his mother would instruct his grandmother to give him an extra allowance. He is happy that his mother has trust in him and his ability to be a responsible consumer. On the other hand, his mother interprets his level of responsibility as a sign that her son is being raised well by his grandmother and that he is disciplined.

Despite the practical and symbolic value of money gifts, other migrants still prefer to consult family members and friends regarding their tastes, preferences and needs. This provides a unique opportunity to build rapport and to reconnect with estranged family members. Moreover, relatives who have never met each other get the opportunity to form close relationships through phone calls, video chats and the circulation of gifts. Since migrating to Japan seven years ago, Castelo (aged 32) has been consistent in sending packages back to the Philippines. Since he does not want to spend a lot of time shopping for the things he will send, he often consults his sisters and mother before shopping. According to him, it is always annoying when they change their requests or make additional requests after he had completed his shopping. However, he still enjoys talking with them on the phone about the packages, especially since it gives them something to talk about other than casual conversations about wellbeing and daily experiences; something he refers to as *'girls' talk'*.

Meanwhile, Jasmine (aged 48) has been living in Japan for more than twenty years since she decided to stay after completing her second contract as an entertainment worker/hostess. She has been able to regularize her residency through marriage and has brought over her daughter (now aged 22) to live with her in Japan. She also has a 12-year-old son with her Japanese husband. However, her other son, who is now 24 years old, is still living in the Philippines with her sister, who became his caregiver after Jasmine left. Despite much effort, her relationship with her son in the Philippines has always been somewhat awkward. Jasmine has not been able to build a close relationship with him but she still consistently sends packages for him. To prepare the packages, she calls her son to inquire about what he wants, and although she often tries to get him to do video chat while she is shopping so that he can choose the things she will send, he refuses. Jasmine usually resorts to asking her sister (his caregiver) about his current tastes in fashion and other personal desires. Jasmine told me that she is sometimes

frustrated but she will never stop trying to reconnect with her son. In her case, it is perhaps more about connecting than reconnecting because she left her son when he was still very young, and although she saw him once after she first left, she was not able to see him again until after she became a legal resident of Japan nine years later. By then he had already formed a close bond with his aunt. In her efforts to make amends, she sends whatever he wants, including expensive jewelry and watches, and brand name shoes such as Nike and Gucci. She has even sent money to help him buy a car.

In Jasmine's narrative, we see that she tries to use material gifts to connect with her estranged son. Of course, her gifts provide material care but they may also signal an ulterior motive which seems to subscribe to what Parreñas (2001, p. 122) refers to as the *'commodification of love'* whereby transnational parents deliberately try to use material goods to overcompensate for their absence. Moreover, Jasmine, like other transnational parents, may simply be signaling to the community and even other family members that despite transnational separation, she is able to effectively perform her mothering role; somewhat a celebration of her success as a parent. Nevertheless, Jasmine's provision of gifts cannot be merely reduced to ulterior motives because her efforts are grounded in a complex set of emotions and motivations which go far beyond the material comfort of her son and drives at the heart of maternal bond and care. Furthermore, both Jasmine and Castelo enjoy the conversations and consultations that precede the sending of gifts, although there are gendered dynamics that underpin these communications. For instance, Jasmine is delighted to communicate with her sister and other family members during her shopping trips. She immensely enjoys live-streaming her shopping experiences and video chatting while buying the things she will send. Interestingly, this virtual shopping experience is shared by only female family members. In fact, as I pointed out earlier, her son refuses to engage in those encounters. Similar to Castelo's assertion that mundane talks

about life are "girls' talk", Jasmine's son thinks that video chats while shopping is feminine. Notwithstanding these perspectives, I found that these virtual encounters which are linked to the acquisition of material goods are therapeutic for Jasmine and her female family members and can be interpreted as an exchange of emotional care among the women.

4.4   Constructions of Belonging and Care

The decision to migrate is usually based on the achievement of certain goals such as earning money for children's education, acquiring specific assets or living comfortably in the home country after a period of work/residence overseas. Constructing a dream home or a *'remittance house'*, as Lopez (2010, p. 33) puts it, is a key goal of contemporary transnational families. Researchers have found that Filipino migrants consider the building or repairing of a house as a major priority for their remittances (Bagasao et al., 2004; Aguilar et al., 2009). In my study, I found that building one's own house or to build a house for one's parent(s) is not only a personal accomplishment but sends many other signals which are far more valuable than the economic value of the physical structure. Aguilar et al. (2009) pointed out that, in the context of the Philippines, a house is a cultural symbol of personhood and connectedness among family members but also in the wider community. Moreover, it ascribes certain status and prestige upon its owners and occupants. Houses (or even additional rooms, as I found) are forms of both real and symbolic capital which migrants are keen to acquire and maintain.

Before moving to Japan, Clover (aged 42) had lived in a slum community in Metro Manila with her aunt and cousins. She had moved to the city from nearby Bulacan to explore what she perceived to be a better life. However, since she had not met the success she desired, she decided to accept a contract as an entertainment worker in Japan. After completing three such contracts, she decided to stay in Japan as an undocumented migrant. During her time as a circular migrant,

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she managed to extend her aunt's house by building two additional rooms; one for herself and one for her aunt. According to her, these rooms were well-furnished with quality furniture and modern appliances. While she was away in Japan, her room was not frequently used. It was treated like a 'special room' and would only be occupied if other family members were visiting. Moreover, it was cleaned daily and she would be consulted if anything would be rearranged or if it would be used to accommodate visitors. Subsequently, she has collaborated with her brother, who works in Saudi Arabia, to start the construction of a house for their elderly parents in their hometown in Bulacan. Her sister, who is the primary caregiver for her parents, is overseeing the construction project.

In their study of a community in upland Batangas, Aguilar et al. (2009, p. 163) described huge imposing houses *'that migrants build but do not live in'*. They further argued that these houses are transnational investments in kin relationships, family ties and community membership. In the preceding narrative, we see that even though Clover had not built a new house, the extension of her aunt's house could be interpreted as a similar gesture. Moreover, the way her room was treated with a kind of reverence is evidence of how a physical structure embodies the person who owns it and acts as a symbol of continued presence and familial ties. Lopez (2010, p. 33) also described a colonial-style mansion that was built in the rural Mexican community she studied. According to her, this empty mansion was the *'talk of the town'* and an object of admiration and envy from other community members. Indeed, many remittance houses are bases of status elevation and community recognition. This is a key part of why Clover and her brother are building a new house for their parents. Clover told me that she knows that the other community members will marvel at the beauty of the house once it is completed. Even more importantly, the community will see tangible evidence of the solidarity that exist among her siblings and the respect and appreciation they have for their elderly parents.

Therefore, it is important to recognize the emotional value of remittance houses, especially for migrants who experienced situations of precarious housing prior to migration. For them, building a proper house or improving an existing house is essential. Moreover, these physical structures are imbued with all sorts of symbolic meanings.

Vacant houses or rooms that are built by migrants possess significant symbolic value and signal economic and social success, but can they be considered as a waste of valuable resources? Perhaps that argument could be convincingly advanced. However, in my study, many migrants and their families assert that the acquisition of family property in the form of land or houses is a speculative but safe investment, not only economically but also in the maintenance of familial ties and the satisfaction of obligations. This is particularly relevant in the context of increased migration flows from the Philippines to Japan, which intensifies transnational and diasporic trends between the two countries. I found that Filipino migrants in Japan actively seek to preserve ties with their families back home by mobilizing financial resources for investments which they believe will prepare the ground for their eventual return.

For instance, Elma (aged 40) first came to Japan to visit her sister who had been living here for a long time with her Japanese husband and children. She fell in love with the place and decided that she would find a way to migrate to Japan. After her next visit she decided to stay in Japan and work so she applied for a job in a Filipino restaurant where she worked for a few years. That is where she met her Japanese husband, a salaryman [office worker] at that time. She subsequently changed jobs and is now an English teacher with a private Japanese company. It has been twelve years since she migrated to Japan and she still misses her beloved homeland. She said:

Ohh. I love the Philippines. It is my home forever. You know, since I have been able visit, I go there every year. It makes me feel relaxed when I am with my people. Living here [in

Japan] is not easy. Of course, I want to go back there when the time comes. I think it would be a good place for us [her and her husband] to retire.

Elma's desire to return to the Philippines 'when the times comes' is partly what motivated her to purchase a condominium unit in the upscale Makati community in Metro Manila. Until recently, the apartment was usually vacant except when she is visiting with her husband or when her family members from Cavite decided to take a trip to Manila to spend a few days there. For these family members, visiting her apartment was like taking a vacation, especially because that condominium has facilities such as a pool, a lounge/party room and a well-equipped gym. Beyond the physical comfort, her family members enjoy social status and are envied by their community members. Moreover, while the apartment is not physically present in her hometown in Cavite, in the minds of the community members, it acts as a sort of memorial of her and objectifies the social mobility she and her family now enjoy. Essentially, the apartment is an embodiment of the hard work she has done in Japan, which will be memorialized long after she has returned to the Philippines.

Elma's investment in confirming and maintaining familial bonds, and reinforcing her presence in her community, may be interpreted as irrational and financially wasteful since the apartment is sometimes unused. However, that is not the full story. For the last two years, Elma has been renting her apartment to short-term visitors through the Airbnb platform. According to her, she chose this option because she can earn some money while she and her family can still enjoy spending time there. Besides, she did not want to be seen as prioritizing money over her family. This narrative demonstrates that economic decisions are often tightly intertwined with and embedded in social relationships which are based on local cultures and practices of kinship and affinity. Moreover, the acquisition of property serves as an insurance policy in the absence of proper social security. Many of my informants, particularly middle-aged ones,

expressed concern about their later years. For them, building a house or buying an apartment is a valuable safety net for the future.

The material and symbolic value of a house (or apartment) goes far beyond its exterior and the perception of those who behold it. Particularly for the female migrants in my study, financial remittances also fulfill their gender-based obligation of performing 'reproductive labour' such as preparing meals, washing clothes and cleaning. Researchers such as Hochschild (2000) and Parreñas (2001) have shown how migrant women caught up in a 'global care chain' have transferred their reproductive obligations to 'other mothers' and female members of their transnational family network. Undoubtedly, the performance of these tasks come with substantial physical and emotional burdens. As a symbolic gesture, many of the women I studied remit money specifically for the purpose of buying high-tech household appliances such as washing machines, microwave ovens, vacuum cleaners and stoves that would somehow reduce the burden of doing housework for the women who are left behind to provide daily care. The possession of these appliances plays a vital role in the reorganization of family life and symbolizes upward social mobility. However, more importantly, they signify a deep sense of solidarity and reciprocal exchange among the women involved in these care networks. This is not to say that men are excluded from this exchange. Samuel (aged 42) has only been in Japan for four years and still struggles to find a stable well-paying job, but he has made much sacrifice to remit money for the acquisition of appliances that have reduced the burden on his wife who is taking care of their two girls. This is particularly helpful for her since she is balancing her reproductive labour with her career as an office worker.

4.5 Care(ful) Symbols

The money and gifts that migrants send reflect their commitments, priorities and desires. Although sent across vast geographic divides, they are vital components of intimate social relationships. Many studies have shown that remittances tend to serve many functions and represent specific expectations and meanings. Carling (2014) pointed out that in some cases, remittances are perceived as help from the sender, while in other cases, it is interpreted as compensation for work done on behalf of the migrant. Of course, remittances can be construed in numerous ways, which are not always positive. In fact, the way they are interpreted elicits certain emotions and has implications for how the monies or gifts are used and what behaviour is expected as a result of the transaction. For instance, some migrants expect gratitude from recipients, while others expect diligence from their children. Still, others use their remittances as proxies of familial control and manipulation. In this sense, the motivation of the sender and the perception of the recipient is key in these exchanges, although for the purpose of this analysis, I focused disproportionately on the intentions and motivations of the migrant.

In the narratives I shared, these counter-balancing emotions and interpretations are evident. The extent to which the sending of remittances and gifts is purely altruistic was of key importance to me. Particularly, I was interested in how *'careful'* or *'careless'* the migrants were in sending certain signals and symbolic meanings to their family members and communities back home. This information, I believe, informs a nuanced understanding of how material exchanges are linked to social relationships and reciprocity in transnational families. Carling (2014) argued that gift remittances are characteristically irregular and are not linked to the needs of the recipient; moreover, they are not obligatory. However, as I shared earlier, the money that Rose sends to the Philippines takes care of the living expenses of both her children and her aunt, who is their primary caregiver. Since her aunt is unemployed, when possible, Rose sends

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some extra money for her. This 'extra money' is neither defined as a gift nor a salary, although it could be understood as a form of compensation. Rose is careful in the way that she talks about this money and ensures that she does not mention it to other family members because she does not want to embarrass her aunt. Her aim is to show her appreciation for the care that her aunt provides to her children and she hopes that her aunt also appreciates the gesture, although Rose does not require explicit gratitude. Contrary to Carling's (2014) argument, we see that it is often impossible to separate gifts from regular support based on responsibility. Furthermore, whether or not these transactions are obligatory is quite subjective and depends on the sender's sense of obligation. In this case, Rose feels a deep sense of obligation to support her aunt, not only because she takes care of her children, but because the aunt also took care of Rose while her own mother was an overseas migrant in the past.

In other narratives, migrants and their family members tried to ensure that their symbolic gestures are appropriately received and interpreted. We saw that although Elma started renting her apartment, she ensured that her family still had access to the social prestige and physical comfort that the apartment afforded. Perhaps more importantly, she was also careful that her family members and the community did not interpret her economic decision as an abandonment of familial bonds and commitments. Nevertheless, in some cases, whether or not the gesture is purely altruistic is questionable. For instance, I met some migrants who constantly reminded family members of the economic value of the goods they were sending and the intensity of the work they had to do to earn the money they sent home. While this helps family members back home to realize the gravity of the sacrifices being made by the migrant, if the economic aspects of the transaction are overemphasized, the symbolic value can be diminished, as I found.

Given these considerations, it would seem that it is always bad to tout economic wealth and its possible implications for the provision of care. Nevertheless, as I found in my study,

there are situations where the public display of wealth sends positive messages and bolsters symbolic gestures. For instance, when Clover's uncle suddenly died from a heart attack, she went to great lengths to reduce the stress of her aunt by sending a large sum of money to cover the funeral expenses. Aside from the extreme grief her aunt felt, given her relatively low socioeconomic status, she worried about the financial costs of her husband's death. Clover was unashamed to talk about the money she spent to ensure that the funeral was properly done. For her, it was important to show the community that the family could afford to bury their dead in style. Indeed, this was a kind of symbolic care to her aunt who was saved the public embarrassment of being unable to bury her husband. Interestingly, Clover's affluence was never displayed to her aunt, who was always made to feel like she was in charge. As Fresnoza-Flot (2009) highlighted, events such as funerals, births, weddings, anniversaries, baptisms and school graduations often prompt the sending of remittances and/or gifts; moreover, there are certain social meanings attached depending on the event. My findings seem to contradict Cliggett's (2005, p. 38) argument that "the actual gift itself matters very little, while the process of gifting is at the core" because, as I discussed earlier, the amount of money sent was critical to the accomplishment of the goal of burying her uncle in style. Certainly, the process of the transaction was important, but to ignore the economic value of the gift itself is to overlook the inextricable link between the economic and the symbolic value of gifts, especially in a context of low socioeconomic status or the experience of being in such a state.

4.6 Contentious Remittances

Notwithstanding the best efforts of migrants and their family members, the sending of remittances and the resultant effects are often fraught with conflicts, misunderstandings and resentment. The matter of familial conflict arising from the distribution, utilization and control

of remittances has been often overlooked in studies of Filipino transnational families. Many of these studies over-emphasize the positive effect of migrants' remittances without acknowledging the contentions and conflicts that are associated with the differing expectations of both senders (migrants) and recipients (family members); and the rivalry and envy that often exist among family members back home.

4.6.2 Disingenuity and Familial Accountability

In the Philippines, like other developing countries, there are many unsatisfied needs and wants, which often encourage the diversion and/or misuse of remittances that are intended for specific projects mandated by the migrant who sends the money. This is often the source of many conflicts within the families I studied. Conflicts between family members and migrants are usually linked to the spending habits of certain family members who divert remittances towards their personal agendas as opposed to the intended aim of migrants. In some cases, the problems were associated with the acquisition of personal luxury items such as expensive clothing, shoes and/or electronic devices; however, in other cases, remittances were diverted towards seemingly 'good' efforts such as the running of a family business or daily family expenses for food and other household expenses. In the latter cases, intentions seem altruistic, to the extent that the money is spent for the family. However, the remittances were diverted without the knowledge and approval of the sender; sowing seeds of mistrust and resentment, and often open conflict, once the sender becomes aware of what the remittances were actually used for.

In Section 4.4, I shared that Clover and her brother, who works in Saudi Arabia, are funding the construction of a new house for their parents. Even though they believe that

the house will be tangible evidence of the solidarity that exists among the siblings, the relationship among them is not without conflict and tensions. Their sister, who is the primary caregiver for their elderly parents, is the one who oversees the construction project. While they appreciate her efforts in providing hands-on care to their parents and managing the construction of the new house, they are sometimes frustrated with her because, in the past, she has used their remittances to keep her businesses afloat when she experienced financial difficulties. While the monies were diverted only temporarily until she could acquire other funds, Clover and her brother were upset because the construction of the house was halted without their knowledge and approval. It was not until another family member mentioned it to Clover that she contacted her sister to clarify the details. Since that incident, they have asked other family members to monitor and 'surveil' the construction project, even though they still send the remittances to their sister.

In another case, Angel (aged 29) told me that:

My father is always asking me for more money. I remember he told me that his farm was damaged from the typhoon [Haiyan] so I sent a large amount of money to him to repair the damage. After I sent the money, my sister told me that he had lied to me and that he was using my money to buy things for his girlfriend. I became very angry and I didn't talk to him for a long time.

In both cases, the migrant(s) who send(s) the remittance became aware of the disingenuous behaviour of the recipient by another locally-based family member. Beyond the conflict that ensues between the migrant and the errant recipient of the remittances, another dimension of the conflict takes place between the family members back home who become suspicious and/or bitter towards each other for reporting the situation to the migrant, on one hand, and misusing the remittances received, on the other. In Clover's case, the relationship between her sister (who temporarily diverted the remittances) and

her aunt who reported the situation to her are still strained. Without these vigilant family members who report familial wrongdoing, migrants would not be able to monitor the use of their remittances. In essence, they act as accountability mechanisms for migrants and in some cases are accused by other family members of trying to gain favour with migrants in order to extract resources at will. In some cases, like the building of property or business ventures like farming, verification and monitoring could be carried out during visits to the Philippines. However, for undocumented migrants who are not able to travel freely, this is not an option; they have to depend on the watchful eyes of family members to keep others accountable.

Keeping recipients of remittances accountable seem to be mediated by factors such as age and established gender norms. For instance, when Angel confronted her father about lying to her and squandering her hard-earned money, he chastised her for being disrespectful to him; being her father and an elderly person. He also asserted that he is the head of the household and should not be questioned or reprimanded for making financial decisions; even if those decisions are allegedly associated with his personal sexual pleasures, infidelity and alcohol consumption. Angel told me that she often remits money to her mother who is usually judicious. However, in this case, she decided to send the remittances directly to her father in order not to damage his male ego, especially because he had specially requested the funds for his farm, following the destructive typhoon. As I found, gendered power relations within the family and household sometimes remain even if migrant women become more financially empowered. This is especially true when male family members are older or have equal endowments of financial resources.

4.6.2 Unsatisfied Expectations

Transnational social fields are usually bound together by moral systems predicated on shared ideas of obligation and reciprocity. Within these transnational spaces, different actors experience familial changes in very different ways. For some, the experience is that of being left behind, while for others, the experience is that of leaving 'home'. For those who leave, they might experience the desire to return to the homeland; and some actually return temporarily for short visits or permanently. These various transnational experiences are important because they carry with them significant moral and economic implications.

Successful migrants are expected to contribute financially to the well-being of the primary family; but also, to the extended family members, friends, neighbours and even the wider community. Failure to satisfy these expectations, often puts migrants at loggerheads with their kinship and community networks. The moral dynamics of transnationalism mean that for migrants, practices such as sending financial remittances or packages and/or acquiring property in the homeland can be a source of pride, personal satisfaction and social prestige. However, for some migrants in this study, this is not always possible due to various issues and conditions they experience in the host country. With the current restrictive immigration and labor policies in Japan, it is often extremely difficult for migrants to easily integrate and earn a decent income in order to satisfy these financial requirements and economic linkages to the Philippines. While some long-term residents or foreign-born Japanese citizens (usually Filipinas who are married to Japanese men) are able carve out a successful trajectory, the experience of many others are not as favourable, especially in the early stages of migration.

Elma, whom I introduced in Section 4, shared with me the struggles and criticisms she experienced when she first migrated to Japan. During that time, she worked in a restaurant several days a week and while she was able to survive on the small wages she earned at that time, it was a major challenge to remit money and send packages back to the Philippines, despite the much-heightened demands that she received from family members and friends back home. Even though she tried to grant some of the requests, when she was unable to, she was constantly bombarded by telephone calls and messages of condemnation, which was a great source of frustration and stress for her. Clover told me that she also had similar experiences in her early days in Japan as an entertainment worker. According to her, back then, she was not earning a very bad salary but because of the precarious nature of her job, she tried to retain some of her earnings in the event that something terrible happened. Despite sending a constant stream of remittances, her family members never seemed to be totally satisfied with her efforts. As a result, she often tried to avoid contacting or communicating with them, even when she needed their emotional support. In both cases, I found that the migrant tried to avoid familial communication in order to ward off requests or condemnation. However, as I discuss in the next chapter, this strategy is often unsuccessful because of the instantaneous and ubiquitous nature of current communication media.

Of key interest in these narratives are the endless requests from home and the obvious sense of entitlement to remittances from 'successful' migrants. Even when the migrant made effort, despite limited resources, family members were seemingly never satisfied. In this moral economy of familial care, it appears that the constant sending of remittances and packages is a positive currency. However, if the migrants' endowment of resources does not allow them to spend such currency, they could be excluded from

extracting other sorts of benefits like emotional support from this economy. As Åkesson (2004) elaborated, migrants are expected to remember those at home and prove that they are not ungrateful by providing various kinds of support to those left behind. It is interesting that migrants who fail to stay in touch and send remittances are labelled as ungrateful and dishonourable while family members back home who fail to appreciate the efforts of migrants are not vilified. What we see is that non-migrants feel that they have an inherent right to support from their migrant relatives. They possess a kind of morally-grounded entitlement to support which is commonly accepted and practiced by kin. This is what Gowricharn (2004) refers to as 'moral capital' which is a form of social capital. If such support from relatives abroad is absent or inadequate, family members in the homeland react with indignation. As the narratives showed, family members are often quick to judge their migrant relatives based on their remittance practices. Carling (2008) pointed out that power relations between migrants and non-migrants are often not in favour of the migrants. Moreover, he noted that 'transnational practices are shaped by the multi-faceted nature of the relationship, with migrants and non-migrants experiencing vulnerability and ascendancy at different times and in different contexts' (p. 1453).

Unsatisfied expectations are not limited to the familial realm. Quite often, as I found, demands are made from the extended kinship network and the wider community. In developing countries like the Philippines, the impact of remittance extends beyond nuclear family members. Orozco (2006) highlighted that in many developing country contexts, it is common for migrants to extend care, not just to immediate family members, but also to anyone they deem to be family. In the Philippines, it is not uncommon for entire communities or large portions of communities to be made up of members of one extended family network or a mixture of closely related families. And, even if not related

by blood, community members often relate to each other with deep affinity and kinship solidarity. As discussed earlier, the remittances sent to family members and the properties constructed/acquired reflect the success of the migrant and his/her family members and ascribe certain community status. To the extent that community members and leaders perceive that certain families with migrants have a relatively greater endowment of wealth, those families often become the target of community leaders who seek sponsorship for community events and various community-based funds to support the less fortunate. Unsurprisingly, these community demands are translated to the migrant who is expected to fulfil the requests. In some cases, community leaders make requests of the migrants via their family members who act as proxies. In these cases, it is even more difficult to deny the requests for assistance. Moreover, under the guise of accountability, sponsorship for community events are often publicized and families can be publicly shamed for not contributing or for contributing too little. Here, we see that families are often held ransom and mandated to contribute financially to community efforts. In this case, community leaders leverage the emotions and social standing of certain families and their migrant members to extract resources for their projects.

Despite migrants' resentment of these community-based strategies, they continue to meet the requests. Basch et al. (1994) theorized that migrants do this to remain relevant and embedded in their transnational social fields because of limits to their social acceptance and integration into their host communities. Moreover, Goldring (1998) reasoned that migrants are motivated to perform transnational practices such as contributing to community development projects because of their pursuit of social status in their home communities. She further argued that these practices enhance one's status and may reinforce one's identity as a member of the community. While these perspectives

may be true and convincing, it is necessary to consider the excessive burdens that are associated with such transnational engagements. These mandatory or obligatory practices are not just defined by abstract notions of selfishness or altruism. They have real negative impact on lives that are not just embedded in one context but are lived across borders with demands on both ends. These demands are what often forces migrants to behave in ways that are deemed to be at odds with the ideals of the community or the homeland. As we have seen, migrants are often drawn into unpleasant transnational experiences that are characterized by feelings of guilt, shame and resentment for not adequately participating in communal exchanges that are mandated by a moral framework of transnational family care.

4.7 Conclusion

Undoubtedly, Filipinos at home and abroad have not escaped the global culture of hyper consumption. In fact, their desire for the acquisition of material goods is highly driven and structured by processes of cultural and economic globalization. In many studies of transnational families, researchers have argued that migration lays the ground for the commoditization of love and the provision of care. Moreover, they argue that migrants try to compensate for their absence by replacing emotional intimacy with material commodities and financial remittances. This interpretation is grounded in a conceptualization of love that is based on the separation of emotions and economics. However, as I argued in this chapter, I found that intimate and economic relations are closely linked.

To the extent that Filipinos interpret financial and economic exchanges as expressions of affection, it is difficult to argue that commodities act as substitutes for familial intimacy. Rather, my findings reveal that material goods are highly-valued proxies of emotional care because it

is virtually impossible to separate the two in the consciousness of Filipinos. Therefore, this study does not subscribe to the argument that intimacy and bonds in transnational families are overly commoditized; rather, it demonstrates an alternative understanding of how love and care are expressed in these families and how such expressions are grounded in local cultures of relatedness.

Furthermore, this chapter reveals that the acquisition and circulation of material resources in Filipino transnational families is based on ingrained moral principles that drive intergenerational reciprocity taking place across time and space. Furthermore, these exchanges are based on relative endowments of financial, physical and emotional resources as individual family members progress through the life cycle. Since material exchanges are constituent parts of reciprocal interactions and are vital to an affective moral economy, I argued that material goods and economic transactions often crystalizes and represent a sense of reciprocity; an unwritten contract of future exchange and repayment of care. However, any overt demand for such care would negatively affect the emotions that enable these reciprocal exchanges within families.

As I found in my study, Filipino transnational families attach certain meanings and symbols to material provisions and physical structures. The value of shipped packages, financial remittances and material possessions that are acquired with those remittances are not measured solely based on their market value. To a greater extent, the sentiments attached to those material goods are remarkably more valuable in a moral economy of care and commitment to family. For instance, houses, apartments or even additional rooms built by migrants act as embodiments of their owners and go a far way in memorializing absent family and community members. They epitomize viable investment opportunities, emblematic

attachments to the homeland community, and may even act as monuments of migrants' accomplishments.

The narratives in this chapter demonstrate how the interpretation of symbolic gestures are moderated by the 'careful' efforts of migrants. The remittances and gifts that migrants send, and the houses they construct, can build, embody and strengthen social relationships. However, if migrants do not carefully manage the behaviours and conversations that accompany and surround these transactions, their symbolic value could be severely undermined.

Despite the best efforts of migrants and their family members, the building and/or acquisition of property and the sending/receiving of remittances are often fraught with conflicts and discontents; both at the household and the community levels. At both ends of the transnational spectrum, issues of accountability, manipulation and unsatisfied expectations serve as fertile ground for remittance-related conflicts.

CHAPTER 5

The Virtuality of Care:
Familial Connections, Ambivalence and Breakages

5.1 Introduction

Migration scholars have often focused on the dislocations, disconnections and disruptions that may take place in families that are dispersed across borders. Until more recently, it was assumed that the transnational mobility of family members resulted in increased fragility of familial bonds and intimate relations. More alarming was the perceived imminent demise of the family, as it were. It is true that this increased human mobility has transformed our sociality and the way that we understand and 'do family' but, as recent studies have shown, the assumption that physical proximity is required for the maintenance of meaningful social ties must be reconsidered (Locke, Tam & Hoa, 2014).

Over the last few years, the proliferation of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) and the creation of new media environments have challenged the proposition that robust intimate relationships are predicated on face-to-face exchanges. While fast and affordable international transportation has enhanced transnational family life and remains crucial for these families, it is the significant changes that have taken place in communication technologies, primarily internet-based, that have truly transformed how family members interact and connect with geographically-dispersed kin (Madianou & Miller 2012; Robertson 2014). With these developments in media and communication technologies, it is now possible to consider that transnational migration does not inevitably result in disconnections

with family members, friends or even the homeland. At the bare minimum, constant instantaneous communications between migrants and their loved ones are possible.

In this chapter, I engage with critical issues related to how communication media technologies shape the exchange of care and intimacy within contexts of geographical dispersion. I also discuss the ways in which new and older forms of communication shape intimate interactions and reconstitute the temporal and spatial aspects of Filipino transnational family life. One of the key questions raised is how effective technology-mediated transnational exchanges are in substituting for physical co-presence, which is widely accepted as the foundation of strong and healthy family relationships. By interrogating these issues, I build on a valuable body of research which theorizes how ICTs facilitate new forms of intimacy and virtual togetherness. This chapter is a potent elaboration of how Filipino transnational family members adopt creative strategies to integrate their fragmented existences and (re)embed themselves into each other's temporalities.

Following this introduction, the next section presents a brief discussion of existing literature regarding the proliferation of internet-based communication media and how its ubiquitous nature and saturation of contemporary life have transformed the concept of 'presence' and the way people interact with each other. Based on empirical data, Section 3 explains how families preserve and nurture their collective commitments to the maintenance of kinship by using ICTs to (re)enact and (re)create mundane existences but also to recognize, celebrate and display significant milestones along the family life course. Section 4 features a balanced analysis of the potential and actual ambivalent effects of adopting new ICTs as a tool for exchanging care in transnational families. Preceding the concluding section, Section 5 re-examines the proposition that technology-mediated virtual presence is sufficient. The narratives presented in this section shows how physical visits in both directions (Japan and the

Philippines) complements virtual exchanges rather than replace it. Overall, this chapter provides an account of how Filipino transnational families create and maintain a sense of oneness and continuous co-existence through the adoption and usage of various forms of technology.

5.2 Technological Omnipresence Across Borders

This new social environment of ubiquitous connectivity has transformed the lived experiences of transnational families. The omnipresence of the internet and other forms of digital media have facilitated and mediated familial communication in unthinkable ways. The dawn of what Madianou and Miller (2012, p. 125) termed *'polymedia'* signifies a crucial shift in the dynamics of international migration and the way that connections are maintained in transnational families. Conventionally, *'co-presence'* was perceived as tantamount to face-to-face communication and was preferable compared to interactions that were mediated by communication technologies. Baym (2010) contented that written internet-mediated communications such as emails lacked the social cues necessary for conveying emotional content and meanings, which, he argued, is vital for effective personal communication. Even with significant evolutions in ICTs, there is still widespread concern about the efficacy of the internet for interpersonal relationships (Turkle 2011).

Nevertheless, the development and expansion of ICTs present remarkable possibilities and solutions to earlier challenges associated with communicating from afar. Recent studies have demonstrated how migrants and their families utilize digital media in creative ways to 'do family'. Madianou and Miller (2012), in their study of communication practices among transnational families, developed a *'theory of polymedia'* that elucidated how the flux of various ICTs creates a media environment where users can selectively use the most appropriate media

to manage their relationships and satisfy their communication demands. This theory is useful to the extent that it allows us to see how one communication medium is related to other media. Moreover, it highlights the agency of users in selecting the medium/media that best suit(s) their needs. For instance, in the past, the sending of letters and packages where frustrating because of frequent delays and physical damage. However, in a polymedia environment, there is a plethora of alternate options (social media, mobile phones, video calling etc.) which migrants and their families exploit at will. Rather than focusing on the unique properties or features of specific technologies, the concept of polymedia points us to how users exercise agency in navigating media environments and choosing suitable platforms from a range of communicative opportunities.

ICTs are temporal means by which geographically-dispersed families engage in routine synchronised transnational communication enabling them to preserve and nurture bonds across time and space (Baldassar 2008; Baldassar et al., 2007; Cabalquinto 2018; Horst 2006; Wilding 2006). Widespread access to affordable mobile communication devices and platforms and their ubiquitous use invoke an ambience of perpetual interaction (Katz 2011). Madianou (2014) explained how the availability of polymedia creates an *'always on'* presence among migrants and their families. This is what she later called *'ambient co-presence'* Madianou (2016, p. 183) whereby people, through the receipt of continual updates and notifications, become highly and discretely aware of the everyday lives and activities of their significant others. This is facilitated through the background presence of those who use mobile and social media platforms. Other researchers have elucidated notions of *'connected presence'* and *'mobile lives'* to highlight how people have harnessed their newly-acquired capacities to connect with others and manage their increased mobility without jeopardizing the bonds they share with dispersed significant others (Elliott & Urry, 2010, p. 1; Licoppe, 2004, p. 135). Indeed, in her discussion of transnational

families, Nedelcu (2012, p. 1340) referred to the *'new geographies of everyday life'* within which these families conduct their daily existence. In these new geographies, 'the (physically) absent [family member] renders himself or herself present by multiplying mediated communication gestures up to the point where co-present interactions and mediated communication seem woven in a seamless web'. These conceptions help us to better comprehend the interesting ways in which ICTs are transforming social life and how distant ties and connections are sustained, even if lived across international boundaries.

5.3 Negotiating Virtual Intimacies

Regardless of extended separation due to various forms of international migration, Filipino transnational families with members in Japan often endeavour to preserve and nurture their collective commitment to the endurance of their sense of kinship and familyhood. As the following narratives demonstrate, the families I studied made great effort to re-enact and (re)create a sense of oneness and continuous co-existence through the adoption and use of varied forms of technology.

4.6.2 Mundane Connections

It was already six in the evening on a chilly Tuesday evening in October when I arrived at Jose's apartment, which he shares with two other Filipino compatriots. They all work at a nearby factory but Jose had suffered a minor injury at work and was off for a few days. As I put down my things and get ready to start our interview, he busied himself setting up his camera and Skype connection. Soon his wife, Yolanda, in the Philippines appeared on the camera. At first, she was shy and somewhat defensive but soon she relaxed and communicated freely. Jose (aged 42) and Yolanda (aged 37) got married only 2 years before he first migrated to Japan. Yolanda is a stay at home wife who is dedicated to raising their two children Anna and Analyn (aged 8 and 10 respectively) while her husband is working in Japan. Before long, we heard the sound of the Jeepney's

horn signifying that their children were arriving home from school. Once the children realised that their father was online, they rushed into the room to greet him and recount their interesting experiences that day. While the stories were quite uneventful, the delight displayed on Jose's face was noticeable. As Yolanda continued to prepare the family's dinner and the children started their school assignments, we settled into our conversation, even as we could hear the sounds of Yolanda's and the children's movement and intermittent conversations. Every now and then, the children would shout a question about their assignments to Jose and he would pause to respond before resuming our interview. After about an hour and a half, Jose signals that he needs to prepare himself to 'have dinner with his family'. By that, he meant that he would prepare his own meal and they would sit together and have dinner while video-conferencing.

As we see in this short vignette, internet-based audio-visual technology allows migrants to interact with their loved ones in very intimate and creative ways. Although Jose is not able to physically touch his wife and children, he can join them for dinner and perform his paternal role by communicating with them in real time. He can even assist his children with homework and casually listen to their mundane stories. This creates a sense of integration and seamless (re)production of family time. Other migrants I spoke with told me that they also stay tuned to the daily happenings back home and that their ability to do that was extremely significant, to the extent that whenever there is a technical disruption on the part of the internet service provider (ISP) or when the online activities of family members and friends were 'not normal', it would immediately result in anxiety and a need to restore connectivity. For instance, Jasmine (aged 48), whom I introduced in Chapter 4, not only enjoys live-streaming her shopping experiences and video chatting with her sisters while she is buying the commodities she will send to the Philippines for them, but she also communicates with them several times throughout the day and especially at night when they have their after-dinner chats and gossip sessions. Among

the families I studied, daily rituals of family life in the Philippines are maintained across borders via ICTs – fathers help children with homework, siblings engage in banter and gossip, women provide cooking tips to men and romantic passions are stimulated and reinforced. In Jose's narrative, I shared that his wife was somewhat defensive when she first realised that I was there with him when they connected on Skype during my visit. As Jose later explained to me, they usually spend this time to exchange 'sweet talks' and flirt with each other, so she felt that I had infringed on their private time. He smiled embarrassingly as he tells me that sometimes they even engage in 'virtual sex' via their smartphones. In this case, the mobility of the smartphone is valuable since he shares his apartment with two other men and would have to move to a private place during these encounters.

The ability to 'see' and 'be' with their family members back home via videoconferencing significantly affects how migrants navigate their separation and their new lives away from loved ones. This is especially true in the early stages of migration regardless of the length of stay abroad. It is now almost a year since Karen (aged 31) came to Japan for graduate studies. Because of the restrictions of her scholarship, she is not able to visit the Philippines to see her 5-year-old son and her husband, as well as her other family members. She told me that in the first few weeks, she was distressed and cried daily. During those moments, she was able to comfort herself by video chatting and texting with her husband, mother and sisters. For her, it was also important that she did a video call every night before her baby goes to bed so that she could give him a 'good night kiss'. In addition, throughout the day, she would receive updates on the daily activities of her family members and, most importantly, her son. In Jose's case, he has been in Japan for more than five years, and although his emotional struggles were more

acute in his first two years, he still laments his separation from his family. But, he is thankful for the ability to stay in touch with them on social media and to have dinner together several times a week, even if it is only virtually. ICTs' ability to bring separated family members together in the same room brought a sense of being integrated. Migrants are able to join the quotidian routines of loved ones by being 'always on' and available, though active conversations may not take place. As I found, just the background sounds that signifies activity or the app-based 'online' status is enough to create a subliminal sense of comfort and co-presence. As Licoppe and Smoreda (2005, p. 331) intimated, it is like 'filling in absence by a sort of incantation'.

5.3.2 Marking & Displaying Key Milestones

The convenience of smartphones and the growing popularity of Facebook and other social media platforms like Instagram, Viber, LINE and WhatsApp have truly altered how members of Filipino transnational families relate to each, but also, how they visually display their individual lives and collective commitments. Sharing pictures and videos of places visited, meals eaten and other routine experiences not only allows dispersed family members to participate in the daily lives of each other, it also sets the stage for more significant exchanges. In my study, I found that it was very common for family members to post pictures or videos of events such as weddings, graduations, Christmas dinners, birthday parties, baptisms, the christening ceremony of a baby and other family celebrations. Posting or sending these pictures and videos are especially important for those family members who could not participate in the event in a corporeal sense, primarily international migrants. When Clara's (aged 38) younger sister got married two years ago, she was unable to visit the Philippines to attend the wedding but she was

integrally involved in the planning and financing of the wedding. In the months and days leading up to the wedding day, she spent many hours calling, texting and sending voice notes to family members back home to ensure that everything was properly arranged for the big day. Moreover, on the day, her nephew live-streamed the ceremony and reception party and posted the pictures and videos on Facebook, tagging Clara in the posts. She told me that although she was not physically present, she felt as if she was there in a very real sense. As she showed me the pictures in which she was tagged, she beamed with pride and unbridled joy, pointing out that she was the one who picked out the dress.

Family rituals are typically performed, experienced, and symbolized through the physical congregation of family members. Indeed, it is during family gatherings that kinship bonds are solidified through the physical expression of affection, the sharing of meals and the exchanging of gifts and personal anecdotes. Lopez (2006) highlighted that, in the context of the Philippines, family celebrations are key to the building of unity among families and the strengthening of affections. With increased migration from the Philippines, it might seem that family traditions and the resultant benefits are disrupted. However, I found that even if these traditions and rituals have been gradually reshaped, they remain as vital and relevant as they ever were and their continued performance is facilitated by the instantaneous nature of recent communication media. Moreover, while the ways of communication and the opportunities to connect have been radically transformed, the basic structures, practices and principles of family relationships remain fundamentally inviolable. Events like births, weddings and deaths that happen across the life course can amplify the need for corporeal presence; and sometimes demand family members to show their commitment to the family. As Finch (2007, p. 79) articulated,

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'there is a real sense in which relationships do not exist as family relationships unless they can be displayed successfully'.

Given the existence and proliferation of a 'polymedia environment', which I referred to earlier, the families in this study are able to create a shared consciousness of their familyhood. Furthermore, they are able to display their continued ties and commitments as a well-functioning family by publicly recognizing and signifying key milestones and momentous events when typical families would celebrate together. Indeed, we have seen that new technologies are often used selectively to reproduce the bonds, obligations and expectations that preceded the migration experience.

Baldassar et al. (2016, p. 136) claimed that the less synchronous nature of older forms of media, such as letters, provided opportunities for families to smooth over the narrative of their family histories and idealize their relationships, creating and projecting a favourable impression of their families. Further, they contended that 'the recent emergence of ubiquitous connectivity brings the mundane into sharper focus, ensuring attention to the minute detail of daily life at the expense of a more imaginative narrative'. However, I argue that a sharp focus on the mundane does not necessarily lead to a discounting of a larger consciousness of noble familyhood. Besides, even if recent media exposes the family to more public scrutiny, the very same media allows for immediate action to restore the family's reputation and mitigate further damage. For instance, I found that when some family members 'misbehaved' on social media, other family members or kin would use the same media or another very similar platform to reprimand the errant kin or to contact other kin who would manage the situation. Sometimes, this is done publicly but, depending on the underlying relationship, it is often done privately. I will return to this element of surveillance later.

5.4 Ambivalent Connections and Disconnected Intimacies

5.4.4 Online Cosmopolitans?

Some migrants who share pictures and/or videos of iconic places visited, shopping sprees; and new fashionable clothes, handbags and shoes are marking important milestones in their migration trajectories, inviting family members, friends and other fictive kin to 'like' and 'comment' on their fortunes, accomplishments and experiences. Their posts convey messages of affluence and accomplishment, signifying the migrants' sophistication and upward mobility. These transnational signals are the results of migrants' attempt to (re)create a cosmopolitan image of their lives in Japan and to show that they have become more modern and empowered through migration. As McKay (2012, p. 141) wrote: 'Cosmopolitans think of themselves as sharing a distinct set of feelings and attitudes, priorities and judgements, and practices of self-shaping that constitute their global belonging'. Moreover, they often consciously shift their concepts of self away from that of their families and communities back home, creating a personal imaginary whereby they are open to new and different cultural ideas/experiences that are not necessarily supported by those back home.

Bryan (aged 24) is one of the most prolific Instagrammer and Facebook user among my respondents. He came to Japan four years ago to join his mother who lives in a rural city in Central Japan. He is a construction worker but whenever he gets days off or extended holidays, he travels to iconic places around Japan. During these trips, Bryan often takes beautiful photos and videos and uploads them to social media platforms, tagging his relatives and friends. In one of his favourite posts, he is pictured in Shibuya, a very busy and spectacular area in Tokyo, known for its huge electronic billboards and

flashing lights – the Time Square of Tokyo. Bryan's post is captioned 'Shibuya Crossing Intersection'. Later, in a comment, he wrote 'Busiest intersection in the world!'. Needless to say, he is fashionably clothed and his Nike sneakers are prominently displayed. When I spoke to him and mentioned the quality and perfect angle of the picture, he told me that he has a keen interest in photography and usually pays close attention to photographic details. I believe him. In the picture, it seems that Bryan was careful to ensure that he snapped the picture at the opportune time while there were Japanese-looking people in the background, as if to prove the authenticity of his post.

Other migrants, such as Jenelyn (aged 36) also posts photos and videos that are interpreted as evidence of a successful migration experience. Her son, Chris (aged 10), whom I introduced in Chapter 3, said:

> *My mother and father are over there in Japan. I think they have a beautiful life because they can travel and live in a nice country like Japan. I would like to live there too one day. I think they will send for me soon.*

Although Chris is only 10 years old, he already aspires to migrate one day, inspired by the seemingly lavish lifestyle of his parents. Other children of migrants whom I spoke to also seem to have their own imaginaries of a future migration trajectory that would bring them the same accomplishments that are perceived from the photos and videos of their migrant family members. Indeed, these photos and/or videos often serve as the bases of motivational discussions, which usually happen with left-behind children and their caregivers. Not only children are inspired; other family members and friends are also drawn into virtual realities of luxurious lives that are predicated on stories that are not completely true. I found that, quite often, the stories shared are creatively crafted and staged by the migrants, calling the veracity of the photos and/or videos into question. For

instance, Matt (aged 23) often shares photos and videos of himself driving a Honda sports car and he delights in the number of 'likes' and 'comments' he receives. The car is owned by his close friend who often allows him to drive it so it would seem that the car is actually his. However, he makes no effort to clarify the ownership of the car whenever he talks to loved ones back home.

We see, here, that Matt virtually displays an image of himself that is less accessible in real life but which he perceives to be desirable and inspiring, especially for his family members and friends in the Philippines. In fact, like doting fans, they look forward to his posts and when they are not forthcoming, he is requested to give updates about his recent exploits. Interestingly, these photos and videos are often circulated within the family and the community as evidence of the success and upward mobility of the individual and, by extension, the family.

The photos and/or videos that migrants share reveal their personal interests and exploits but they also expose and reinforce the shared consciousness of what family members should aim for, particularly the younger ones. Moreover, even if the posts are based on a virtually-constructed reality, they are potent enough to serve as documentations of the family's upward mobility and create a sense of shared familial success.

5.4.5 ICT-mediated Familial Burden

To the extent that family members, friends and others consider migrants' posts as evidence of material wealth and improved well-being, their posts can act as double-edged swords. Horst and Miller (2006) documented how access to cell phones gave transnational family members the chance to persuade their loved ones abroad to send

more money and commodities. Predicated on a perception of increased endowment of material resources and a widespread belief in the Philippines that migration is perhaps one of the best remedies for local development challenges, requests for economic assistance is often heightened when migrants project an image of affluence and success. With the instantaneous and ubiquitous nature of recent communications, migrants can no longer 'hide' from these requests. With older forms of communication, like letters or emails, migrants were able to 'buy time' to find an excuse for refusing or to gather the resources necessary to fulfil the demands. However, true to form, recent requests are instantaneous and demand an immediate response, often throwing the migrant into chaos and despair. This emotional distress is linked not only to the inability to meet these demands but also to the response of family members, friends and fictive kin when requests are not fulfilled. I found that responses ranged from mild sadness and disappointment to abrasive and derogatory comments as well as outright conflict. Bryan related an incident where his cousin requested him to send the shoes he was wearing in one of his posts. When he refused the request by citing the fact that it was a birthday gift from a friend, his cousin accused him of lying which led to a heated argument. Their relationship has been strained ever since.

These kinds of situations can leave migrants and those back home distraught, especially when conflicts spill over onto social media platforms. In a Facebook post, Regina (aged 54) wrote:

> *They said…FAMILY IS FAMILY…No matter what…for me…it's different…my family is like a bank…you have to be a good depositor first…if possible you must have an initial deposit of a large amount of cash including your unique attitude and senior citizen has no power. So…I quit. The reason? Got no millions in my pocket. For me…PURE WATER IS THICKER THAN BLOOD.*

When I contacted Regina to query what had happened she told me that she was involved in a conflict with her brother and his wife because she tried to borrow money to pay for a medical procedure but they refused, citing past incidences when she was a migrant and was not 'willing' to help them financially. Regina is a returned migrant who worked in Japan for more than ten years and was married to a Japanese man. At that time, her socioeconomic status was relatively good and she told me that her family members and friends often perceived her as rich and successful. However, after she and her husband separated she was deported to the Philippines based on allegations of involvement in drug-related crimes. Even though she gets some support from her son who is still living in Japan, she sometimes struggles financially.

Requesting and exchanging various forms of assistance is at the core of daily family practices; however, it often becomes burdensome for migrants since they are perceived as having a greater endowment of material resources and social networks which they can tap into. This generates ambivalent effects whereby new heightened expectations of support and favours from migrants threaten to undermine fundamental ideals of familial reciprocity. Therefore, these everyday activities, facilitated by ICTs, may become less meaningful or even contentious. Indeed, the availability of ICTs may force migrants to communicate with family members they would prefer not to engage with. But, as I demonstrated in the previous section, migrants often implicate themselves by the narratives of self that they craft and display.

5.4.6 'Caring About' Surveillance

The growing use of ICTs, primarily social media, has positively affected the ways in which families maintain their sense of belonging. Yet, it also has important implications for the surveillance of family members, which can result in increased conflicts and discontents.

Migration projects, while often linked to the achievement of certain familial goals, are sometimes grounded in individual's desire for autonomy and self-actualization. This is particularly true for those migrants whose identity, in part or whole, are in violation of certain principles and morals of the home country contexts. In a country like the Philippines, where more than 80 percent of the population is Roman Catholic and a vigorous Muslim minority is active in the southern islands, religion is pervasive and often obstructive. For Filipinos who identify as LGBTQ, opportunities to congregate with other members of that community or to live the lifestyle they desire may be highly restricted. This is particularly true for those who are from close-knit rural communities or relatively poor urban enclaves. Matt, whom I introduced earlier, is a gay man from a rural community in Davao. He migrated to Japan almost five years ago to join his aunt. While he was encouraged to move to Japan by his aunt and cousins for economic reasons, a key motivating factor for him was his perception of Japan as a progressive country with less religious dogma – a place where he could live freely without the watchful eyes of family members and neighbours. Indeed, McKay (2012, p. 142) mentioned that cosmopolitans, or those aspiring to live cosmopolitan lifestyles, often seek to subscribe to secular belief systems and liberal values. Moreover, citing Ulrich Beck (2002), she articulated a social struggle whereby becoming cosmopolitan draws migrants into a process of

transformation that pits them against parochial nationalists and religious fundamentalists. These apparent 'enemies' are often found within migrants' own families.

Nowadays, when Matt uploads pictures and videos, he is careful not to post those that include his gay friends or when he is having a good time at a nightclub or gay bar. According to him, based on previous posts, he had to lie to his family when he was questioned about his sexuality and the morality of his regular group of friends. Because most his family members are fervent Catholics, he was reprimanded and reminded not to lose his faith. Moreover, since that incident, his mother has asked his aunt to watch him more closely. During further conversation with Matt, he told me that his family is concerned that he may be bringing the family's reputation into disrepute. Matt's careful construction of posts, based on what family members and friends back home may perceive, implies that the *'selfies'* that he posts are of a self that is not fully cosmopolitan or autonomous but which is simultaneously linked to the home context and to immoral *'others'* who might tarnish the reputation of his family.

The surveillance effects discussed above are not only directed at family members in Japan. Migrants also intentionally use ICTs to monitor activities back home. For instance, I found that Japan-based parents whose children are still in the Philippines frequently browse social media to check what their children are doing, where they are and who they are with; and they give 'comments', online and offline, about what was noticed. Needless to say, the comments are not always friendly, even if they are registered on the platforms as *'friends'*. Children who are friends with their parents on social media are inviting them into a social space of intimacy but they are also exposing themselves to greater scrutiny. No doubt, this is true for other familial relationships, including siblings, romantic partners and other extended kin. Horst (2006) described how conflicts which

developed among romantic partners based on questionable sounds that were heard in the background during transnational calls, intensified once infidelity was suspected.

Characteristically different from the active intentional surveillance discussed so far is another form, which is less obvious and potentially more invasive. Based on various features and capabilities of new media, users' online presence is increasingly more visibility to family members and close friends. Nowadays, even *'friends of friends'* can access one's online information and share it. Truly, much of the information gleaned from social media is somewhat unintentional and based on indirect interactions, not just among people but between users and smart technologies, which provide information such as: online status, the time when a user was last active, the location of users and posts and the reactions of others to the posts of loved ones. This facilitates an ambient awareness of family members and friends as well as the people they associate with. These features are welcomed by the transnational parents I spoke to who are keen on monitoring their children without having to deliberately search for information or hunt them virtually. By receiving automatic online notifications, they are able to watch over their children and keep them safe. In Chapter 3, I introduced Simon who is having disciplinary problems at school including alleged drug use. Because his parents who are both abroad (his mother is in Japan and his father is in Abu Dhabi) are usually very busy working, they often rely on technology-generated notifications to prompt them to take further actions like calling his grandparents in the Philippines to check on him or take disciplinary action. Actually, it was based on these constant notifications that his mother finally decided to take an extended visit to the Philippines to deal with the matter. It is interesting to note that much of the information Simon's parents glean from social media are indirectly accessed through the posts and status updates of his 'friends' and the posts he is tagged in. This is

similar to what Madianou (2016, p. 139) found in her study and a form of what she called *'information leakage'*. She pointed out that even though parents are not the intended audience of these posts, they serve as an invaluable source of information, particularly for transnational parents.

While the geolocative features of social media and mobile devices are sometimes embraced by migrants when their posts are attached to geographic locations, particularly those who want to display when they visit iconic locations or sightseeing spots, there are possible ambivalent effects when users' online activities are linked to specific locations and timelines. For instance, I found that for couples who had trust problems before or after migration, this kind of information leakage can aggravate existing problems when the information gathered from automated notifications contradicts other deliberately shared details. This was the case with Herbert (aged 39) and Lucinda (aged 40) who had marital problems before he migrated to Japan for work. There has always been rumours that he was promiscuous and that he has several extramarital relationships with other women. After he migrated, those rumours did not subside and even intensified. Because of the history of their relationship, Lucinda is more attentive to his posts and promptly checks whenever she gets notifications about his activities. If there are any discrepancies, she confronts him, citing the 'evidence' she gathered from online platforms. As other scholars have found (see Wilding, 2006 and Madianou & Miller, 2012), the pre-existing quality and historical context of relationships are key factors that structure how ICTs affect family relations.

As demonstrated, there are various ways in which the ubiquitous online 'presence' of family members can be problematic. Madianou (2016) hinted that it could even be tyrannical. Whether that is true depends on the individuals involved and the kinds of

relationships they share. Nevertheless, my study suggests that people at both ends of the transnational family spectrum are perturbed by the intrusive eyes of loved ones who use ICTs to monitor their lives. Indeed, the boundaries of well-intended efforts to facilitate familial co-presence on the one hand and efforts at monitoring or surveiling family members on the other hand is often blurred. To ward off perceived intrusion, many family members adopt creative strategies ranging from intermittent online absence to 'unfriending' and even 'blocking' those they find to be too inquisitive. Particularly among the younger family members I studied, the preferred strategy is to use a plethora of social media platforms simultaneously, deleting and recreating their profiles periodically in an apparent cat and mouse game. According to them, it makes it more difficult for older and less tech-savvy family members to scrutinize their activities online. The choice of one communication mode over another and the dynamic use of multiple online platforms demonstrate how personal agency is exercised in managing transnational family relationships.

5.5 Complementary Visiting

As discussed in the foregoing, new technologies and media have led to what Madianou and Miller (2012, p. 1) called the *'connected transnational family'*. The ability of ICTs to facilitate the construction of 'connected presence' and a sense of being together might give the impression that distance is defeated. However, the reality of physical separation often 'hits home' when tragedies strike or when someone like an elderly family member gets ill and hands-on personal care is required. Some scholars refer to these situations as *'crises'* (see Baldassar et al 2007), but I prefer to call them *'opportunities for care'*. During these challenging times,

a telephone call, an email or even multimedia conversations are not enough to provide adequate care for kin; hence, visits become necessary and, sometimes, obligatory.

My intention is not to be alarmist; much to the contrary, in what follows, I demonstrate that during and after routine conversations, family members are often reminded of the actual absence of their loved ones. Moreover, I show that visits serve various purposes which are not necessarily sad or gloomy. Essentially, my main point in this section is that intermittent physical co-presence is a constitutive part of contemporary transnational family life; and that the visits that facilitate corporeal togetherness are complementary to ICT-mediated co-presence. Indeed, transnational travel among family members have significantly increased with lower transportation costs. Urry (2003, p. 155) highlighted that transnational travel has increased concurrently with the proliferation of new communication technologies that, in some ways, may substitute for physical travel. This may seem strange or paradoxical but he further elaborated that:

> *"...the bases of such travel are new ways in which social life is 'networked'. Such increasingly extensive networks [transnational families], hugely extended through the informational revolution, depend for their functioning upon intermittent occasioned meetings. These moments of physical co-presence and face-to-face conversation, are crucial to patterns of social life that occur 'at-a-distance' ...So life is networked but it also involves specific co-present encounters within specific times and places. ...thus, different forms and modes of travel are central to such social life, a life involving strange combinations of increasing distance and intermittent co-presence.*

While I was in the Philippines for my fieldwork, I met many kind and loving people; and made great friendships that have endured to the present. After I returned to Japan, one of my new friends expressed his interest in traveling to Japan. Since I had already been living in Japan for more than six years, I felt confident enough to show him around so I accepted his request

to be his tour guide. On the day of his arrival, I arrived at Chubu Airport way ahead of his scheduled landing, hoping I would be able to observe and possibly speak with Filipinos/Filipinas who were waiting to welcome their loved ones or bidding farewell to those who would be departing for the Philippines. My anxiety that I would not be able to talk with anyone or that it might be awkward to start a conversation was quickly dispelled when Reyna (aged 30) stroke up a conversation with me. After talking with her for a while, she told me that her two-year-old son was at home with her husband Masayuki (aged 34) and she had come to the airport to meet her parents who were going to be visiting for a few weeks. As we waited for the arrival of her parents, she showed me the 'selfies' and text messages they had sent earlier informing her that they had checked in and were waiting for boarding. She also showed me their Facebook post announcing their trip to Japan, in which she too was tagged.

Once her parents' flight had landed, she become increasingly excited, explaining to me that she had waited two years for this moment; since the birth of her son, which her parents could not attend because her father had to do a surgery around the same time. Unsurprisingly, when her parents finally cleared immigration and came to the arrivals hall, her actions included a mixture of jumping, hugging, kissing and crying. While that might seem chaotic, her actions and open expression of happiness did not differ much from the throng of other Filipinos in the arrivals hall, who likewise were unable to contain their emotions. As they got ready to go home, I said goodbye and arranged to meet them again in a few days.

When I visited the family a week later, I heard that they had already visited several iconic sightseeing spots in Kyoto and Hiroshima and were making plans to visit Tokyo the following week. However, their planned visit to Tokyo was not just for sightseeing. Reyna's parents would meet the parents of her husband, whom they had no chance to meet since Reyna and Masayuki got married almost three years ago. They met while Masayuki was an expatriate in

Manila and she was working with an advertising company. Their romance blossomed and when he was repatriated to Japan, they decided to get married. She joined him in Japan soon after and their baby was born a year later.

After their baby turned one year old, Reyna found a job teaching English a few days a week. Since her baby was still very young, the flexibility of her schedule was convenient but she still had many logistical challenges, given that her husband had just gotten a promotion and had to work very long hours. Furthermore, because her in-laws were living in Tokyo while Reyna and her husband lived in Nagoya, they were not able to provide practical assistance in terms of childcare. In the absence of biological and conjugal kin, she has had to depend on the support of other Filipino women in the diaspora. During the time her parents were visiting, her parents took care of her baby and often cooked the family meals; not only practically relieving much of Reyna's care burdens but also nurturing bonds with their grandson and son-in law.

This narrative demonstrates the multiple purposes of visits in transnational families. Reyna's parents are able to satisfy their dreams of visiting iconic places in Japan, reunite and reconnect with their beloved daughter, meet their new extended family members and provide nurturance to their grandson. Even if he is too young to understand and appreciate the temporal care provided by his grandparents, this bonding experience lays the foundation for a deep and lasting sense of solidarity; an investment in social capital that can be utilized later when they themselves need care.

In Chapter 3, I introduced Georgina (aged 49), who has been living in Japan for more than twenty years and has travelled to the Philippines multiple times since she regularized her immigration status through marriage. In that chapter, I elaborated her dependability by sharing how, among other gestures, she visits the Philippines whenever her children and grandchildren needs her. Of key interest here are the trips Georgina took to the Philippines for the birth of her

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first grandchild and to take care of her daughter-in-law and her grand-daughter when illness restricted her ability to take care of her baby. In this case, she was also providing a kind of proxy care to her son. I also introduced Hideki (aged 40), a Japanese man who is married to a Filipina and who provides nurturance to their son when his wife Olga (aged 35) visits the Philippines to provide personal care to her ailing mother; trips that could last up to two months.

In these two narratives, transnational visits are to the home country, unlike the visit of Reyna's parents to the host country. Nevertheless, we see that visits in either direction are centred on the exchange of various forms of care and the nurturance of familial bonds. The reciprocal transnational visits of family members allow care to be reciprocated across time, space and generations; and allow for virtual intimacies to be actualized, even if temporarily.

5.6 Conclusion

The narratives presented in this chapter reveal that contemporary communication technologies have increasingly enabled transnational families to modify the setting and dynamics of their family routines and bolster their sense of familyhood. Despite extended periods of living apart, Filipino transnational families in this study have been able to cultivate and maintain a deep sense of collective existence across space and time. Even as migration and increased physical mobility have scattered family members, the creative use of a range of communication technologies have mitigated the detrimental effects on familial bonding and have allowed dispersed families to reconstruct the ways in which they exchange intimacy and provide care. In this chapter, we have seen that family members' notions of belonging and togetherness remain resilient, aided by innovative communication and transport technologies. We have seen that the proliferation of various internet-based technologies has spawned changes

not only in the methods of communication, but also in the substance and potency of the relationships that underpin these communications.

I have argued that new technology-mediated communication patterns and practices adopted by transnational families are not characteristically different from interactions that take place in a context of physical proximity. Indeed, mundane as well as more significant milestones and rituals are re-enacted and celebrated virtually. Moreover, new media have allowed for the public display of shared upward social mobility and migration successes, which lay the foundation for crafting future migration trajectories, primarily for younger family members. My findings challenge the existing paranoia that increased migration of family members results in emotional disconnections and the undermining of familial solidarity. In fact, this chapter offers an alternative to the idea that strong family relationships are predicated on physical face-to-face interactions, although my argument does not discount the importance of such encounters.

Despite the significant benefits that derive from the use of new media, as we saw in this chapter, there are equally important problematic aspects which must be considered. The increased potential for surveillance, coupled with heightened economic and material demands, can result in contentious relations and emotional burden, although some family members benefit from these asymmetrical power relations. Nevertheless, closer examination of these social exchanges reveals opportunities for agency and the adoption of creative strategies in the management of privacy and the navigation of new media environments.

In this chapter, I have taken a balanced approach at analyzing the issues involved. I have shown that even if Filipino transnational families are using ICTs to construct rituals of virtual connectedness that might temporarily substitute for physical co-presence, the limitations of digital communication technologies often remind family members of their separation and, in

some cases, prompt them to physically travel to reunite with their loved ones. Notwithstanding the capacity of internet-based communication technologies to facilitate a sense of reality by capturing social cues such as voice tone, facial expressions and gestures during conversations, distance is still felt since these technologies cannot completely replace physical intimacy. Concurring with Baldassar (2008), I emphasized that whereas virtual and proxy forms of co-presence are extremely valuable, physical togetherness remains the gold standard of familial bonding. Meanwhile, the increased affordability of international travel has made it more feasible for families to be intermittently co-present. Indeed, transnational family life now combines the virtual and the physical in a complex web of communication and intimacy.

CHAPTER 6

Filipino Migrants' Care for Family and Country:
Beyond Financial Remittances

6.1 Introduction

In discourses surrounding diasporas and how they contribute to their home countries, focus is often placed on the flow of remittances, mainly financial resources. Furthermore, even when social remittances, in terms of the transfer of skills, knowledge and expertise, is considered, little or no attention is given to how migrants in the diaspora contribute to their home country through the 'care' they provide to their family members back home. Moreover, in a world where the movement of goods, financial capital and, more recently, skills take precedence, there is little room for the consideration of other forms of contribution to national development. This deprives members of the diaspora their right to be appropriately recognized and, possibly, rewarded for their altruism and commitment to their country and their families.

In this chapter, I engage in a discussion which moves beyond this myopic view by showing how the Filipino diaspora, particularly members of transnational families, contribute to the development of the Philippines, not only in terms of financial resources, but also the practical social aspects of care provision across borders and within the diaspora. The new conceptual understanding of 'transnational care' that I advance in this chapter lays the foundation for a larger advocacy that calls on the Philippine state to provide reciprocal care to its family members - the sons and daughters of the nation. This reciprocal care would take the form of greater social welfare and social protections for migrants and their family members.

To elaborate migrants' provision of care to the Philippine state, I engage with concepts such as 'transnational social fields', 'imaginary communities' and 'migrant citizenship'; and reconsider what constitutes 'social remittances'. These conceptual frames are then used to analyze the Philippine state's discourses surrounding migrants as well as the practical and symbolic activities of migrants.

The chapter is organized into six sections. Following this introduction, Section 6.2 and Section 6.3 discuss how the Philippine state crafts and deploys discourses of heroism and patriotism to fuel its recruitment, deployment and repatriation of commoditized Filipino migrants. These sections also elaborate how migrants are emotionally mandated to contribute economically to their country. Building on empirical data presented in preceding chapters, Section 6.4 elaborates the practical and symbolic forms of care that migrants exchange with family members. Section 6.5 expands the discussion of care by interrogating how migrants practically circulate care within their diasporic communities and how those acts of solidarity can be considered as care for the country; considering that members of the diaspora are extensions of the homeland.

6.2   State-brokered 'Heroic' Migration

The Philippines is well-known for its reputation as one of the most prolific migrant-sending countries in Asia and across the world. Despite, or perhaps because of, various global and local challenges such as the oil crisis in the 1970s, structural adjustment programs in the 1980s, the Asian financial crisis in 1997, the global recession in 2008 and a series of political conflicts and natural disasters, as discussed in earlier chapters, migration from the Philippines has not waned. Indeed, international migration has continued and increased under the administration of six successive presidents: Ferdinand Marcos, Corazon Aquino, Fidel Ramos,

Joseph Estrada, Gloria Arroyo and Benigno Aquino III. The trends continue under the current Duterte administration.

The unabated migration of overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) and the resultant increase in financial remittances has long attracted the attention of Philippine policymakers who have identified the migration sector as a key economic driver and a cornerstone of the national economy. Hence, government institutions and policies have been designed and deployed to secure the financial gains of citizens' migration (IOM & SMC, 2013; Asis, 2006). These policies are geared towards recruiting, deploying, regulating, and managing labour migration. Undeniably, Philippine migration is highly institutionalized and controlled by what Rodriguez (2010) has labelled a 'labor brokerage state'; involved in the commoditization and exportation of migrants. Guevarra (2009) has also detailed how the Philippine state manufactures heroes by marketing idealized dreams of what is personally and collectively desirous. Despite well-known and longstanding government policies and institutions that facilitate overseas employment and purport to protect the welfare of those deployed overseas, the government maintains that the organized deployment of Filipinos for overseas employment is only a temporary arrangement. This idea is even codified in Section 2 of the Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act of 1995 (RA8042), which proclaims that the '[s]tate does not promote overseas employment as a means to sustain economic growth and achieve national development'. Unsurprisingly, this proclamation is often challenged by civil society groups, like the Philippine Migrant Rights Watch (PMRW) and the Development Action for Women Network (DAWN) among others, who assert that the state is not committed to creating decent jobs and opportunities at home that would prevent migrants from having to go abroad in order to take care of their families. Moreover, in light of high-profile cases, like the Flor Contemplacion, Sarah Balabagan and Marcris Siosan cases, and many other reports of

employer abuses abroad, civil society groups often express concern that the welfare of migrants are not being guaranteed.

In the face of relentless lobbying, recent administrations have taken steps to not just ameliorate the situation, but also to engender and solidify the 'culture of migration' that exists in the Philippines. In a 'social contract' with the Filipino people, the Benigno Aquino III administration (2010 ~ 2016) promised to 'create jobs at home so that working abroad [would] be a choice rather than a necessity'. He also committed to protecting and guaranteeing the welfare of those who chose to migrate for employment. However, long before this social contract, the Philippine state, through the Philippine Overseas Employment Agency (POEA) and other associated agencies, has designated Filipino migrants as 'bagong bayani' [modern day national heroes]. Indeed, mass overseas migration is not portrayed as 'brain drain', but rather, as necessary acts of heroism by those who 'choose' to take up employment abroad. By migrating to work overseas, these Filipino heroes are undertaking a noble act of sacrifice for the greater good of the nation. Hence, for their actions of altruism, they are often given a hero's welcome upon their return to the Philippines and are afforded special allowances for baggage, duties-free shopping and other 'luxuries'. Moreover, every year, June 7th is celebrated as "Migrant Workers' Day" and the entire month of December is designated as the "Month of Overseas Filipinos". During this month, various government-organized events are hosted both in the Philippines and at Philippine embassies and consulates around the world. At these events, migrants get the chance to fete with government officials and are made to feel extra-special and appreciated for their hard work and sacrifice on behalf of the Philippine nation.

In many migrant-sending countries, migrants are generally lauded for their positive contributions to the home country and its development (Carling, 2008; Guevarra, 2009; Levitt, 2001; Tyner, 2009). From that perspective, it is not new or surprising that Filipino migrants are

recognized for their efforts in building their country through their remittances. However, in the Philippine context, this recognition of migrants and their designation as heroes are predicated on a deeper Filipino cultural belief. While the idea of labelling migrants as *'bagong bayani'* is a political construct that is situated in a nationalized development discourse, it evokes the imagery of the bayanihan spirit, which is underpinned by the Filipino idea of 'bayan'[nation] and *'bayani'* [hero]. To be a *'bagong bayani'* is to embody the valiant efforts of a hero that is able to endure the hardships associated with an undertaking that results in shared progress. Therefore, a *'bagong bayani'* is the ideal member of the family, community and the nation because it is on his/her strength and character that the group is founded and maintained.

6.3 Migrant Citizenship

Given this idealized notion of strength and valour, which is predicated on partnership, unity and nationalism, it is understandable why the Philippine state would employ this loaded sociocultural and emotional rhetoric to mandate migrants to offer economic assistance to the state through their families. Rodriguez (2010), in her elaboration of how the Philippine state brokers labour to the world, pointed out that through its policies, rhetoric and action, the state is more interested in reconfiguring the meaning of Philippine citizenship than reintegrating its migrant citizens. According to her, this is a survival strategy of the state because in order for labour brokerage to remain feasible, Filipinos must be willing and able to work abroad while maintaining their economic, political and affective links to the homeland (p. 78 ~79). This kind of reconfigured citizenship is what she calls *'migrant citizenship'* and is characterized by an expanded understanding of what it means to be Filipino. Migrant members [citizens] of the Philippine nation, therefore, can enjoy the same rights and privileges as those who stay home. By leaving, they do not lose their status as bona fide 'daughters' and 'sons' who contribute to

the nation state – the Philippine family; especially because this *'migrant citizenship'* increasingly mandates employment overseas.

In keeping with the bayanihan spirit of camaraderie and solidarity, Filipino migrants, though dispersed abroad, are encouraged to stay true to their Filipino roots and to stay in touch. Staying in touch, as prescribed by the state, means sending a constant stream of remittances for 'the family'. In order to secure this stream of remittances for national development, the state infuses these economic activities with certain symbolic meanings and emotional mandates. Consequently, migrants and their consanguineal family members in the Philippines are engulfed in strong discourses of nationalism and sacrifice whereby national identity and belonging is the 'social glue' that holds them together in an imaginary nation; one they share with other Filipino compatriots at home and abroad who are construed as members of one big Philippine family with the state as the head. This encourages the maintenance of attachments to the homeland and instils a strong sense of duty to family, community and country.

This creative strategy of the Philippine state is not only effective in terms of extracting resources from migrant family members, it is also politically sterile and plausible to the extent that sending home a portion of one's earnings is not legally mandated, as was required under the Marcos dictatorship. However, the current strategy, while not apparently dictatorial, deploys a robust attack on migrants; appealing to their emotional sensibilities and commitments to kinship and familial bonds. What we see is that the consanguineal family is used as a proxy to extract financial resources from migrants to be used for the greater good of the national family. Given the foregoing discussion, it would be reasonable to propose that any care provided to family is a kind of care offered to the state. This is plausible because of the nationalistic discourse deployed by the Philippine state, which enlist all Filipinos at home and abroad into a national imaginary family with certain rights, privileges and responsibilities.

6.4 Social Contributions of Migrants

Notwithstanding the state's exaltations of heroic acts of altruism and sacrificial love, the primary criteria for such national esteem are the economic exchanges that migrants are involved in (Asis, 2006). Indeed, the heroism of migrants hinges on their loyal sending of remittances from abroad. This is problematic on two counts. First, an essentialist view of financial and monetary transactions is not enough to caption the breath and complexity of migrants' contribution to their homeland. Therefore, a more expansive view of financial remittances is necessary. Second, many migrants who experience financial challenges, and are therefore not able to send regular streams of money, are implicitly excluded from this form of heroism, even as they are integrally involved in other more social activities which could be deemed as care for family, community and country.

In the preceding chapters, I demonstrated how dispersed family members exchange various forms of practical and symbolic care. We saw that physical objects such as money, food, clothes/shoes, toiletries, household items (electric appliances) and personal gadgets are often remitted to family members. As I have argued, these physical commodities are loaded with deep sentimental and symbolic value; therefore, to a large extend, they are not just financial remittances. To the extent that they are negotiated and mandated through social interactions and commitments, they could be considered as 'social remittances'. Indeed, as I found in this study, much of the money and physical commodities sent to the Philippines by migrants are not only consumed by immediate family members. Contents of balikbayan boxes are often shared among community members and are sometimes sent specifically as donations for the less fortunate or for those who do not have immediate family members abroad. For instance, Rose (aged 36), whom I introduced in Chapter 3 related that even if she is not aware of what exactly her family members need, she still sends random things in the boxes because

those things can be shared with 'friends'. Moreover, she told me that she often sends monetary donations for community activities like Christmas parties, back-to-school treats and community fiestas. This was also very common among many other respondents who thought it was right and moral to assist those who are in need, especially in one's community back home. Joyce (aged 44), who is a leader of a community-based group in Nagano prefecture said:

We are Filipinos. We have to give back to our country. We are blessed to be here [in Japan] so we have to help our people. It's our duty.

Of course, migrants' contributions are not limited to the money and commodities they send to the Philippines. Based on their expanded knowledge of international trends or family members' perception of them as experienced cosmopolitans, migrants are often consulted for ideas regarding fashion, investments, career choices and even parenting strategies. In Chapter 5, we saw that Clara (aged 38) was unable to visit the Philippines to attend her sister's wedding but she was requested by her sister to select the wedding dress. When I spoke to her sister Johanna (aged 32) in the Philippines, she told me that:

She [Clara] is so fashionable. I often look at her page [Facebook] for ideas when I have a party or something. Sometimes I ask her too. She is my role model. She knows a lot about fashion and make-up because there [in Japan] they are so beautiful and always dress nicely.

I also found that migrants act as peacemakers/mediators in family conflicts. Based on their increased status in the family as breadwinners or sources of money and other commodities, migrants have the ability to exercise significant power in reprimanding errant family members, especially those back home who are careful not to offend migrants who could cut of the supply of remittances. These disciplinary engagements are not just restricted to children but also extend

to adult family members who are often not able to resolve their differences without an authority figure whom they perceive to be 'neutral'. As I found, even if migrants are not really neutral, by virtue of their physical absence, they are sometimes perceived to be uninvolved in the dispute and, therefore, eligible to mediate.

Another key role played by migrants is that of migration planners, guides and 'social safety nets' in the early stages of family members' migration to Japan. Filipino migrants, especially those who have stayed in Japan for an extended period, are able to use their experiences to help family members back home to plan their own migration projects; and when new migrants arrive in Japan, they provide accommodation and other support such as finding a job and settling in their new environment. This is particularly important because new migrants often do not have enough Japanese language skills and social connections. Nathan (aged 23) told me:

> *I will go to Japan soon. My aunt and brother are already there and they helped me a lot when I was thinking about going there. I will work in the factory where my brother is working but I want to study too......Of course, I will stay with them in their house. They will be the ones to take care of me!*

Social remittances refer to the ideas, practices, norms, values, behaviour, knowledge and skills that migrants send or bring home with them when they visit or repatriate (Levitt, 2001; Levitt & Lamba-Nieves, 2011). Levitt (2001) defined four forms of social remittances that migrants transfer to their home countries. These include norms, practices, identities and social capital. According to Levitt and Lamba-Nieves (2011), social remittances are transmitted when migrants return to or visit their homelands, when non-migrants visit their families and friends in the host country or when proxies such as letters, cards, emails and videos, as well as packages are sent home. Levitt (2001) suggested that social remittances are, in fact, more important than

financial remittances. However, I propose that both are equally important because, as I argued in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4, both are inextricably linked and, therefore, cannot be isolated from each other based on the social sentiments that underpin and surround the sending and receiving of money, packages, emails, videos and other forms of familial exchange.

6.5 Diasporic Care

In the preceding section, I focused on the care circulated within family networks. To substantiate by earlier proposition that, in the Philippine context, caring for family is caring for country, I now turn my attention to the 'care' circulated within the Filipino diaspora in the Chubu region of Japan.

In addition to facilitating the migration of family members, many migrants assist other Filipino compatriots to make a comfortable transition to their new lives in Japan. Various community-based groups such as the Iida Filipino Community (IFC) and the Chubu Philippines Friendship Association (CPFA) are keen on providing information and practical support to both new and more established migrants. They also plan and host social activities that bring members of the diaspora together. During these events, funds and commodities (food, clothes, toiletries etc) are usually collected to be shipped to the Philippines as donations. In some cases, these funds are used to build or enhance community facilities like barangay[4] offices, schools and health centres. Here, we see that members of the Filipino diaspora in Japan are actively involved in organizing themselves to offer support to each other, to new migrants and to those back home in the Philippines.

A barangay, which is sometimes referred to as a barrio, is the smallest administrative division in the Philippines and corresponds to a village, district or ward. In some metropolitan areas, like Manila, a barangay refers to an inner-city community. In some other cases, it also refers to a suburb or suburban area. According to some sources, the term can be traced to the term 'balangay', which is a kind of boat used by a group of Austronesians when they migrated to the Philippines.

While collective efforts are common, I also found that individual members of the diaspora support each. For instance, in Chapter 5, I shared the challenges that Reyna experienced as a new migrant and mother. Because her husband had just gotten a job promotion and her in-laws where living in Tokyo while she, her husband and their new baby were living in Nagoya, she had to depend on other Filipinas for practical assistance with her baby when she got a job. Also, in Chapter 4, I elaborated the importance of gift-giving and souvenirs in the Philippine context. In that chapter, I highlighted that undocumented migrants, due to their restricted mobility, are not able to participate in these exchanges. However, migrants who have been able to regularize their immigration status often assist immobile migrants by taking their gifts and delivering it to their family members when they visit the Philippines. Of course, these gifts can be shipped by commercial couriers but the 'personal touch' of having a friend deliver the gift seems to be of significance. Furthermore, it is also an opportunity for those friends to provide feedback about the reaction of family members and the general conditions at home. As I argued before, these acts of solidarity go a long way in establishing and sustaining social relations among the diaspora because, given restrictive baggage allowances, these migrants are forced to limit the gifts they will take for their consanguineal family in order to provide 'care' to fictive kin in the diaspora. Indeed, these 'caring' engagements and social sentiments, while exchanged within the geographic borders of Japan, should be understood as social remittances sent to the Philippines, to the extent that all Filipinos are considered by the state to be members of one big national family.

This expanded conception of the nation state makes it possible to argue that any form of care provided to 'family members', whether domiciled abroad or at home, is an extended form of care to the state and to the national family. As articulated by Basch et al. (1994), we see that these migrants are forging and sustaining multi-stranded social relations that links their

societies of origin with their places of settlement. Truly, my participation in and observation of their networked lives that are lived across borders within 'transnational social fields' revealed that their interlocking networks of social relations make it possible for ideas, practices, and resources to be exchanged. Moreover, to the extent that within these 'transnational social fields' the national boundaries of both Japan and the Philippines blur, we see that these actors (migrants, their families and the state) become as one, virtually and symbolically cohabiting the same transnational space. In this space, sociocultural, political and geographic borders are transformed so that, regardless of the physical location of family members (consanguineal, fictive and national), care can be circulated.

The Philippine state's efforts at grooming migrants and defining their relationships with the nation is not lost on the Filipino migrants in this study. In fact, I found that they are fully aware of what roles they are expected to play and what image of the Philippines they should project. As members of the national Filipino family, they feel that their responsibilities are greater than themselves and their consanguineal families. Furthermore, migrants seem to be keen on maintaining their 'good name' (personal and familial) in their communities back home. Angelita (aged 47) told me:

> *Some of us here [in Japan] behave so bad. We embarrass our country. In the Philippines, we have good manners but when they come here, they behave bad. Why? We have to let them know when they are wrong.*

She went on to express her opinion that even mixed children who are born to Japanese fathers and Filipino mothers in Japan should be sent back to the Philippines to learn 'good Filipino manners'. Angelita's sense of national duty and indignant call for children to be repatriated to the Philippines to learn Filipino values is evidence of a noteworthy finding of this study. Filipino migrants often create goodwill for the Philippine state by acting as unofficial, but

zealous, diplomats and surveillance agents. To that extent, they surveil other members of the diaspora and are not hesitant to reprimand errant family members.

6.6 Conclusion

Although there are significant concerns and anxieties attached to overseas migration from the Philippines, migration is highly valued and sustained, particularly as a strategy to promote family well-being in a context of limited economic opportunities and sparse social protection from the government. As elaborated in this chapter, under the guise of promoting the wellbeing of the family, the state uses sentimental cultural values and familial bonds to emotionally mandate migrants to contribute to the economic development of the country. Migrants who are compliant in sending regular streams of money are therefore designated as patriotic heroes. These hero narratives, however, do not include some migrants who, for various reasons, are not able to actively participate in economic and monetary exchanges. Nevertheless, they are involved in significant social activities in the diaspora, which should be considered as social remittances and a form of 'care' for the state.

I have argued that any care provided to consanguineal family members and fictive kin back home and in the diaspora can be seen as caring for one's country because it relieves the burdens of the state in taking care of those family members. This proposition is possible because, as evidenced by state-led national discourses, caring for country goes beyond conceptions of the country/nation as geographically bound to include 'imaginary nations' consisting of both citizens in the homeland and those domiciled abroad.

Indeed, as discussed in this chapter, social remittances can also include care and support provided to citizens who are living in Japan; given that these members of the diaspora are extensions of the homeland. Moreover, financial and social aspects are closely interrelated

when it comes to the phenomenon of remittances. Financial relations are preceded by and based on social motives that also induce social consequences.

Finally, it is critical to point out that the aim of this chapter is not to support, explicitly or otherwise, the Philippine government's avoidance of its responsibility to provide adequate economic opportunities and social welfare for the people. To the contrary, building on Rodriguez's (2010) argument, I advocate for the Philippine state, as the head of the national family, to provide care to its members based on the principles of reciprocity and familial protection.

CHAPTER 7

Conclusion

Over the last few decades, the nature and magnitude of migration has been significantly altered due to various factors linked to globalization and blurring international borders. As families are increasingly being pulled into the global economy, they are affected by events that take place in other places and time zones. However, while families are at the heart of these global processes, they are often excluded from much of the analyses related to globalization. Although transnational family life is not a new phenomenon, until the late 1990s, family sociologists and migration scholars alike had largely neglected the study of transnational family ties (Mazzucato & Schans, 2011). In addition, migration scholars predominantly focused on individual migrants as the unit of analysis and largely ignored the families to which they belong (Kraler et al., 2011). Moreover, when the family was finally considered in migration research, studies still conceptualized the family as nuclear and/or co-residential, thereby ignoring other family formations including transnational families which are often extended arrangements within which care is provided by various family members who may be scattered across many different countries.

Even though recent scholarship has increasingly recognized new forms of family arrangements such as foster families and same-sex arrangements, family ties and the expression of intimacy are still predicated on physical proximity, ignoring valuable perspectives on how intimacy and familial care is circulated across borders through material, symbolic and emotional exchanges. Undoubtedly, the challenges inherent in these exchanges have likewise been ignored (Baldassar & Merla, 2014; Madianou & Miller, 2012).

Another fault line of migration studies has been the excessive focus on economics as a standalone variable, ignoring its inextricable link with other more social aspects of migration. As scholars such as Dreby (2007) and Schmalzbauer (2004) have highlighted, transnational family formations are largely a result of global economic and political inequalities. Indeed, many scholars have highlighted the ways in which economic theory has saturated the study of migration and how economics is assumed to be the sole or main reason for people to migrate. Based on the assumption that the family belongs in the social reproductive sphere, it is often separated from economic analyses, which operate in the economic sphere (see Zlotnik, 1995; Kofman, 2004).

Nevertheless, as discussed in Chapter 2 of this dissertation, since the 1990s, migration scholars such as Basch et al. (1994) and Glick Schiller et al. (1992), who were early pioneers of the transnationalism paradigm, have been theorizing the nature and dynamics of contemporary migration across international borders. As the chapter highlighted, the concept of transnationalism allows us to look beyond the nation state in order to study transnational family ties. Based on this paradigmatic shift in migration studies, this study has explored and documented the lived experiences of members of Filipino transnational families in the Chubu region of Japan. To advance our understanding, I examined social relations within these families, particularly as it relates to the exchange of caregiving in a context of increased mobility and geographical separation. Indeed, this study responded to the need to better understand increased human mobility and the ways in which it affects contemporary life.

Using the Filipino transnational family as a unit of analysis and adopting the theory of 'care circulation' as a useful analytical framework, this dissertation has demonstrated that a transnational approach is particularly important in the study of families dispersed across international borders. Since the early 2000s, a substantive body of work on what has been

referred to as the 'global care chains' provides insight on how migrants, primarily low-skilled females, have been forced to move from the global south to the global north to perform care work (see Parreñas, 2001, Yeates, 2009 & Hochschild, 2001). While they do this, they inadvertently create care deficits and care drain situations in their home countries. While not totally rejecting the propositions of those scholars, one of my main arguments in this dissertation is that a broader understanding of care and care circulation is more appropriate. As I have done throughout my analysis, it is important to go beyond a dyadic view to consider the extensive network of family relationships which are involved in the provision and exchange of care. As well as the various actors involved, it is equally important to consider the different ways and forms of care and how it flows around the family network and among extended kin. In this dissertation, I adopted Finch's (1989) five categories of familial care: emotional/moral, economic, accommodation, personal and practical.

Concurring with her findings, the narratives presented in the preceding chapters show that the care exchanged among family members could be categorized as emotional, practical, economic, personal/nursing, co-presence or a mixture of various forms. Indeed, throughout this dissertation, I have demonstrated that different family members based in different locations are involved in various kinds of care work, which are aimed at maintaining and displaying an image of a well-functioning family, even if separated by international borders. Adopting this broad definition of care exchange is useful to the extent that it gives a comprehensive picture of the efforts of all family and kin members. From this perspective, we are able to include non-traditional providers of care and demonstrate that feminized migration does not necessarily result in a drainage of care. Much to the contrary, it activates other nodes of care within a broader familial care network and summons family members to play their part, which often results in new role identities and reshaped social relations.

In Chapter 3, I use a life course perspective to identify common roles played by Filipino transnational family members. Particularly, I examine how individual family members' age and stage of life affect who provides care, who receives care, what kind of care is provided and how that care is provided. That chapter revealed that conventional constructions of fathers, children and grandparents as dependent, incapable and resistant to providing certain types of care are no longer accurate and must be re-evaluated and suitably theorized. The chapter also emphasized the active role played by individual family members in the family's care network, regardless of their age and/or gender. The following chapter also showed how transnational family members exchange different forms of care and perform varied types of care work. Chapter 4 showed how and why the Filipino traditions of gift-giving and the sending of balikbayan boxes, as well as the building and/or acquisition of real estate, are closely linked to the creation, embodiment and maintenance of familial ties and belonging, despite geographical dispersion. In that chapter, I interrogated the link between economic transactions and emotions and demonstrated that the sentiments that underpin and surround the sending of commodities and the building/acquisition of real estate are equally or more important than the commodities or physical structures themselves. Furthermore, I highlighted that Filipino transnational families attach certain meanings and symbols to material provisions and physical structures. The value of shipped packages, financial remittances and material possessions that are acquired with those remittances are not measured solely based on their market value. To a greater extent, the sentiments attached to those commodities are remarkably more valuable in a moral economy of care and commitment to family.

The fragmented nature of transnational families, undoubtedly, supports the idea that these families are disconnected. In fact, lack of communication and loss of intimacy is often cited as inherent challenges of family life across borders (see Dreby, 2010 and Parreñas, 2005). It is

true that increased human mobility has transformed the realities of families and the way that we understand and 'do family'. Yet, Chapter 5 of this dissertation presented a detailed account of how communication media technologies shape the exchange of care and intimacy within contexts of geographical dispersion. In that chapter, I discussed the ways in which new and older forms of communication shape intimate interactions and reconstitute the temporal and spatial aspects of Filipino transnational family life. By interrogating the effectiveness of technology-mediated transnational exchanges as a substitute for physical co-presence, I argued that virtual and proxy forms of co-presence are extremely valuable, even though physical togetherness remains the gold standard of familial bonding. Nevertheless, the increased affordability of international travel has made it more feasible for families to be intermittently co-present; allowing them to combine the virtual and the physical in a complex web of communication and intimacy.

The discussion undertaken in Chapter 5 supports and builds on recent scholarship which conceptualizes family life as a verb ('doing family') rather than as a noun or an entity (a co-domiciled is useful to the extent that it shifts our consideration away from a conventional understanding of 'family' as necessarily place-bound. This perspective also highlights current trends in how families are constituted through sets of actions and gestures that possess certain meanings in particular situations. For instance, as presented in Chapter 5, communication practices such as regular videoconference while having dinner, virtual good night kisses, live-streaming weddings and the posting of mundane activities on social media become the 'fragments of daily life' (Morgan, 1996, p. 190). It is from these 'fragments' that transnational families are able to weave their collective consciousness of a vibrant and viable family. This is possible because these 'fragments' of family life are situated in a broader system of cultural meanings and symbolic value.

The care work that family members perform are often evidenced by the exchange of physical commodities, financial remittances or real estate. However, less visible are the emotions and deep sentiments that underpin these more obvious exchanges. Boccagni and Baldassar (2015) highlighted that migration often precipitates emotional changes in the family network. Yet, emotions are often ignored in analyses of transnational families (Mai & King, 2009). This study answered the call for an *'emotional turn'* (Mai & King, 2009, p. 296) in migration studies, which puts 'emotions, especially love and affection, at the heart of migration decision making and behaviour'. In undertaking this task, this study stressed the intersectionality of various dimensions and spheres of transnational care circulation. First, the analysis in Chapter 4 revealed that material goods are highly-valued proxies of emotional care because it is practically impossible to separate the two in the consciousness of Filipinos. To that extent, this study refutes the assertion that intimacy and bonds in transnational families are overly commoditized. Furthermore, it demonstrates an alternate understanding of how love and care are expressed in these families and how such expressions are embedded in local cultures of relatedness where economics and emotions are tightly intertwined. Second, the efforts to maintain familial bonds across borders are grounded in deep emotions of love and belonging; emotions that are strong enough to withstand tensions that arise from 'contentious remittances' discussed in Chapter 4 and ICT-mediated familial burdens discussed in Chapter 5. Third, as Chapter 6 discussed, emotions are often leveraged by the Philippine government to cajole migrants to send financial remittances, which act as a key driving force of the Philippine economy. This demonstrates the obvious link between emotions, economics and politics. Moreover, in Chapter 4, we saw how the emotional and symbolic value attached to packages prompted political action and the passage of legislation in the Philippines.

The emotional work undertaken by family members, and which keeps families functional in difficult times, are not always positive. Indeed, the narratives presented in this dissertation show that family members often perform care work despite extreme emotional burdens. Interestingly, I found that negative emotions were never an impetus or reason to withdraw from the process of care circulation among family members. In fact, even family members whose relationships were strained continued to express affections for each other. Based on these insights, we can now dismantle the myth that transnational family care must be underpinned by harmonious relations. Much to the contrary, familial care work is often performed under conditions of resentment, discontents and even open conflict. Engaging with and analysing these negative emotions is a fruitful undertaking and should be the focus of more studies in the future.

The Filipino transnational family has proven to be a fertile site for studying care circulation within geographically-dispersed families. Indeed, considering the foregoing summary and synthesis of the findings and how they engage with the existing literature, we see that this dissertation has responded to the research questions outlined in Chapter 1. To the extent that the Filipino transnational family is shaped by and embedded in ideological convictions of what a 'good family' should look like i.e. nuclear and co-resident, it would make it impossible for these families to be considered as such. Yet, as evidenced by this dissertation, the remarkable resilience of these families cannot be ignored. Their resilience is built on a collective effort to push the limits of social definitions and prescriptions regarding family life. The Filipino families in this study, to a very large extent, have been able to stay intact by redefining the daily rubrics of circulating love and affection in their family networks. They are involved in a range of emotional and symbolic, but also practical, work despite the challenges of separation. As demonstrated in this dissertation, Filipino transnational family members adopt

various technologies and participate in sentimental economic exchanges in order to maintain their familial bonds and connections; even though their multi-faceted lives are lived across borders. However, as highlighted earlier, most of the family members in this study may be considered comparatively better-off than other Filipinos because of their legitimate immigration statuses, high educational achievements, good language skills and well-paying jobs; among other favourable conditions. To the extent that their endowments of resources allow them to exchange packages and financial remittances; and to acquire and use the technologies necessary to stay in touch, while other less fortunate families are not able to do the same, their stories and realities cannot be generalized as an accurate representation of all Filipino families in the Chubu region.

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Appendices

Appendix A:
Interview Questions – Adults (Migrants)

Section 1   **Background Information**

1) Age
2) Occupation
3) Marital Status
4) Immigration Status
5) Number of Children (if any)
6) Location of Children (if applicable)
7) Family size and composition

Section 2   **Situation Before Migration & Migration Process**

8) What was your life like prior to migrating? (socio-economic, emotional, spiritual etc.)
9) Why did you migrate?
10) How did you make the decision to migrate?
11) How did your children and other family members react to the decision to migrate?
12) Can you describe the actual migration process?

Section 3   **Provision of Care**

13) How do you provide care in your family?
   ❖ Emotional/moral
   ❖ Financial
   ❖ Accommodation
   ❖ Practical/Hands-on
   ❖ Nursing/nurturing

14) Do you send remittances or packages to family members back home? How often? Why?
15) How do you stay in touch with family members?
16) Are you able to provide care to your family members (especially those left behind)?
17) What kind of [transnational] caregiving arrangements do you have in place for your child/children and/or your parents? **(if applicable)**
18) How do you feel about this/these care arrangement(s)?
19) How do you feel about leaving your child/children and/or your parents behind?
20) How do you fulfill your care responsibilities transnationally?
21) Can you describe the relationship with your child/children and/or your parents?
22) Can you describe the relationship with your child/children's designated caregivers?
23) Can you describe your experience as a transnational family member?
   ➢ Benefits
   ➢ Burdens

24) What challenges do you face and how do you deal with them?
25) Do you sometimes have conflicts with family members?
   Can you give me more details?

How do you resolve conflicts?

26) Do you think physical presence is necessary for good caregiving? Why?

Section 4   Meaning/Conceptualization of Good Family

27) In the Philippines, what are the qualities of a good mother/father/child?
28) How would you describe "a good mother/father/child/grandparent/sibling/spouse"?
29) Do you think you are a good mother/father/child/grandparent/sibling/spouse? Why/why not?
30) Do you feel obligated to provide care to your family members (especially those left behind)? Why/why not?

Section 5   Dealing with stereotypes, criticisms and social norms

31) Do you think people judge your family in terms of caregiving?
32) Do you experience peer pressure from other migrant families (both in Japan and back home)?

33) How do your family members (immediate and extended) feel about you leaving?
34) How do you respond to judgments/criticisms?
35) How do you respond to social expectations/responsibilities to provide care?
36) Have you changed your idea/understanding of caregiving since migrating?
37) What role does faith/religion play in your understanding of your role in the family?
38) What role does social networks play in your understanding of your role in the family?

Section 6   Future Prospects

39) Do you think your family situation will change in the future?
    ➢ How?
    ➢ Why?
32) How do you imagine yourself and your family in five years from now?

Appendix B:
Interview Questions – Non-migrant Adults

Section 1   Background Information

1) Age
2) Occupation
3) Marital Status
4) Number of Children (if any)
5) Location of Children (if applicable)
6) Family size and composition

Section 2   Situation Before Migration & Migration Process

7) What was life like before your family member(s) migrated to Japan? (socio-economic, emotional, spiritual etc.)
8) Why did they migrate?
9) How was the decision to migrate made?
10) How did the family react to the decision to migrate?

Section 3   Provision of Care

11) How is care provided in your family?
   ❖ Emotional/moral
   ❖ Financial
   ❖ Accommodation
   ❖ Practical/Hands-on
   ❖ Nursing/nurturing

12) Do you receive remittances or packages from family members in Japan? How often? Why?
13) How do you stay in touch with migrant family members?
14) Are you able to provide care to your migrant family members?
15) What kind of [transnational] caregiving arrangements exist in your family?
16) How do you feel about this/these care arrangement(s)?
17) How do you feel about your migrant family member(s)?
18) How do you fulfill your care responsibilities transnationally?
19) Can you describe your relationship with your migrant family members?
20) Can you describe the relationships among your local family members?
21) Can you describe your experience as a transnational family member?
   ➢ Benefits
   ➢ Burdens

22) What challenges do you face and how do you deal with them?
23) Do you sometimes have conflicts with family members? Can you give me more details? How do you resolve conflicts?
24) Do you think physical presence is necessary for good caregiving? Why?

Section 4   Meaning/Conceptualization of Good Family

25) In the Philippines, what are the qualities of a good mother/father/child?
26) How would you describe "a good mother/father/child/grandparent/sibling/spouse"?

27) Do you think you are a good mother/father/child/grandparent/sibling/spouse? Why/why not?
28) Do you feel obligated to provide care to your family members (including those that have migrated)? Why/why not?

Section 5   Dealing with stereotypes, criticisms and social norms

29) Do you think people judge your family in terms of caregiving?
30) Do you experience peer pressure from other migrant families?
31) How do your family members (immediate and extended) feel about migration?
32) How do you respond to judgments/criticisms?
33) How do you respond to social expectations/responsibilities to provide care?
34) Have you changed your idea/understanding of caregiving since family member(s) started migrating?
35) What role does faith/religion play in your understanding of your role in the family?
36) What role does social networks play in your understanding of your role in the family?

Section 6   Future Prospects

37) Do you think your family situation will change in the future?
   ➢ How?
   ➢ Why?
33) How do you imagine yourself and your family in five years from now?

Appendix C:
Interview Questions – Children (in the Philippines)

Section 1   Background Information
1) Age
2) Sex

Section 2   Situation Before Migration

3) What was your life like before your parent(s) migrated? (socio-economic, emotional, spiritual etc.)
4) Why did they migrate?
5) How was the decision to migrate made?
6) How did you react to the migration of your parent(s)?

Section 3   Provision of Care

7) How are you taken care of transnationally?

- ❖ Emotional/moral
- ❖ Financial
- ❖ Accommodation
- ❖ Practical/Hands-on
- ❖ Nursing/nurturing

8) How do you feel about this/these care arrangement(s)?
9) How do you feel about your parents leaving you behind?
10) What role do you play in providing care to other family members?
11) Can you describe the relationship with your parents and other designated caregivers?
12) Can you describe your experience as a transnational child?
   - ➢ Benefits
   - ➢ Burdens

13) What challenges do you face and how do you deal with them?
14) Do you think physical presence is necessary for good caregiving?

Section 4   Meaning/Conceptualization of Motherhood

15) In the Philippines, what are the qualities of a good mother/father/child?
16) How would you describe "a good mother/father/child"?
17) Do you think you are a good mother/father/child? Why/why not?

Section 5   Dealing with stereotypes, criticisms and social norms

18) Do you think people judge your family in terms of caregiving?
19) Do you experience peer pressure from other migrant families (both in Japan and back home)?

20) How do your family members (immediate and extended) feel about migration?
21) How do you respond to judgments/criticisms?
22) How do you respond to social expectations/responsibilities to provide care?

23) Have you changed your idea/understanding of caregiving since migrating?
24) What role does faith/religion play in your understanding of your role in the family?
25) What role does social networks play in your understanding of your role in the family?

Section 5   **Future Prospects**

26) Do you think people's perception about transnational mothers will change in the future?
   ➢ How?
   ➢ Why?
34) How do you imagine yourself and your family in five years from now?

Appendix D:
Profile of Respondents - Adults

Name (Pseudonyms)	Age	Sex	Marital Status	Current Residence	Current Job/ Occupation	Period of stay in Japan	Travel pattern to Japan	Immigration Status in Japan
Marianne	39	F	Married	Japan	Caregiver	14 years	Circular migration followed by permanent residence	Permanent resident
Luisa	36	F	Married	Japan	Graduate student	3 years	Travelled to Japan for education	Student visa
Samuel	42	M	Married	Japan	Factory worker	4 years	Travelled to Japan for employment	Working visa
Manuel	35	M	Committed (not married)	Philippines	Salesman	N/A	Never travelled to Japan	N/A
Reynaldo	43	M	Married	Philippines	Radiology staff	N/A	Visited Japan a few times	N/A
Hideki	40	M	Married	Japan	Businessman	N/A	N/A	Japanese citizen
Olga	35	F	Married	Japan	Housewife	12 years	Visited Japan a few times before	Permanent resident

							long-term residence	
Anna	48	F	Separated	Japan	Restaurant manager	26 years	Circular migration followed by permanent residence	Permanent resident
Raymond	37	M	Married	Philippines	Driver	N/A	Visited Japan a few times	N/A
Carmela	52	F	Widowed	Philippines	Store clerk	N/A	Visited Japan once	N/A
Georgina	49	F	Married	Japan	Housewife	23 years	Circular migration followed by permanent residence	Permanent resident
Eva	32	F	Single	Japan	Nurse/Caregiver	6 years	Travelled to Japan for work (JPEPA)	Working visa
Miguel	37	M	Married	Philippines	Real estate broker	N/A	Visited Japan a few times	N/A
Rose	36	F	Separated	Japan	Sales staff	11 years	Visited Japan a few times for tourism before long-term residence	Undocumented

Christie	27	F	Single	Japan	Factory worker	8 years	Migrated to join mother after completing high school in the Philippines	Permanent resident
Cecilia	52	F	Married	Japan	Housewife	24 years	Circular migration followed by permanent residence	Permanent resident
Marjorie	41	F	Married	Japan	English Teacher	15 years	Visited Japan a few times before long-term residence	Permanent resident
Castelo	32	M	Committed (not married)	Japan	Factory worker	7 years	Visited Japan twice for tourism before migrating for work	Undocumented
Jasmine	48	F	Married	Japan	Housewife	26 years	Circular migration followed by permanent residence	Permanent resident
Clover	42	F	Married	Japan	Housewife	21 years	Circular migration followed by permanent residence	Permanent resident

Elma	40	F	Married	Japan	English teacher & Translator	12 years	Visited Japan a few times before migrating for work. Subsequently got married to a Japanese	Permanent resident
Angel	29	F	Single	Japan	Gaming/Gambling Center staff	8 years	Visited Japan a few times before long-term residence	Undocumented
Jose	42	M	Married	Japan	Factory worker	6 years	Travelled to Japan for work	Working visa
Yolanda	37	F	Married	Philippines	Housewife	N/A	Visited Japan once	N/A
Karen	31	F	Married	Japan	Graduate student	1 year	Travelled to Japan a few times for tourism before traveling for studies	Student visa
Clara	38	F	Separated	Japan	Cosmetics Merchandiser/ Sales staff	7 years	Travelled to Japan a few times before long-term residence	Undisclosed

Bryan	24	M	Single	Japan	Construction worker	4 years	Visited Japan a few times before permanent migration	Permanent resident
Jenelyn	36	F	Married	Japan	Sales clerk	9 years	Travelled to Japan a few times before long-term residence	Working visa
Alfred	37	M	Married	Japan	Factory worker	5 years	Travelled to Japan once before migrating for work	Spouse visa
Matt	23	M	Single	Japan	Call center staff	4 years	Travelled to Japan twice before migrating for work	Working visa
Regina	54	F	Divorced	Philippines	Massage therapist	13 years (deported)	Circular migration followed by long-term residence	N/A
Herbert	39	M	Married	Japan	Factory worker	6 years	Travelled to Japan for work	Working visa
Lucinda	40	F	Married	Philippines	Small business owner	N/A	Never travelled to Japan	N/A
Reyna	30	F	Married	Japan	English teacher	3 years	Travelled to Japan a few times before	Spouse visa

							migrating with her Japanese husband	
Masayuki	34	M	Married	Japan	Office worker	N/A	N/A	Japanese citizen
Joyce	44	F	Married	Japan	Housewife & Caregiver	18 years	Circular migration followed by permanent residence	Permanent resident
Johanna	32	F	Married	Philippines	Pharmacist	N/A	Visited Japan a few times for tourism	N/A
Nathan	23	M	Single	Japan	Factory worker	Less than 1 year	Travelled to Japan for work	Working visa
Angelita	47	F	Divorced	Japan	Restaurant staff & Caregiver	17 years	Circular migration followed by permanent residence	Permanent resident
Mercy	27	F	Single	Japan	Hotel Receptionist	4 years	Visited Japan for tourism before seeking employment in Japan	Working visa
Ichiro	36	M	Married	Japan	Salary man	N/A	N/A	Japanese citizen

Veronica	45	F	Divorced/Separated	Japan	Housekeeping staff	14 years	Circular migration followed by permanent residence	Permanent resident
Arnold	39	M	Married	Philippines	Driver	N/A	Never travelled to Japan	N/A
Yasmin	30	F	Committed (not married)	Japan	Graduate student	3 years	Travelled to Japan to study	Student visa
Pamela	36	F	Married	Japan	English teacher	2 years	Travelled to Japan for tourism before seeking employment	Working visa
Ren	33	M	Single	Japan	Factory worker	9 years	Travelled to Japan on a work visa before becoming undocumented	Undocumented
Sheila	38	F	Committed (Not married)	Japan	Housekeeping staff	6 years	Travelling to Japan for work	Working visa
Carlo	42	M	Single	Japan	Construction worker & Restaurant staff	8 years	Travelled to Japan for work before becoming undocumented	Undocumented

Sandra	39	F	Married	Philippines	Office worker	N/A	Never travelled to Japan	N/A
Rowena	45	F	Divorced	Japan	Housekeeping staff	16 years	Circular migration followed by permanent residence	Permanent resident
Celeste	29	F	Committed (not married)	Japan	English teacher	3 years	Travelled to Japan a few times for tourism before traveling for work	Working visa
David	30	M	Married	Japan	Engineer	8 years	Travelled to Japan for work	Working visa
Sylvia	43	F	Married	Japan	Housewife	16 years	Travelled to Japan for work before marriage and permanent resident	Permanent resident
Danilo	22	M	Single	Japan	Unemployed	4 years	Travelled to Japan to reunite with mother after graduation	Permanent resident

Appendix E:
Profile of Respondents - Children

Name	Age	Sex	Current Residence	Period of stay in Japan	Travel pattern to Japan	Immigration Status in Japan
Paulo	9	M	Philippines	N/A	Never travelled to Japan	N/A
Chris	10	M	Philippines	N/A	Never travelled to Japan	N/A
Kristina	17	F	Philippines	N/A	Visited Japan once	N/A
Julius	16	M	Philippines	N/A	Never travelled to Japan	N/A
Simon	16	M	Philippines	N/A	Never travelled to Japan	N/A
Benjamin	15	M	Philippines	N/A	Never travelled to Japan	N/A
Yuki	14	M	Japan	Since birth	N/A	Japanese
Julissa	16	F	Japan	Since birth	N/A	Japanese
Hope	12	F	Philippines	N/A	Never travelled to Japan	N/A

Daiki	17	M	Japan	10 years	Travelled to Japan to reunite with mother	Japanese
Alon	14	M	Philippines	N/A	Travelled to Japan twice	N/A
Melissa	16	F	Philippines	N/A	Travelled to Japan a few times	N/A
Gabriela	16	F	Philippines	N/A	Travelled to Japan once	N/A
Jomari	13	M	Philippines	N/A	Never travelled to Japan	N/A
Yuna	14	F	Philippines	N/A	Born in Japan. Visit Japan sometimes	N/A
Charmaine	11	F	Japan	Since birth	N/A	Japanese
Althea	13	F	Japan	4 years	Travelled to Japan to reunite with mother	Japanese
Tomiyoshi	10	M	Philippines	N/A	Never travelled to Japan	N/A
Junna	15	F	Philippines	N/A	Never travelled to Japan	N/A
Pearl	14	F	Philippines	N/A	Never travelled to Japan	N/A

Amor	16	F	Philippines	N/A	Travelled to Japan a few times	N/A
Joshua	13	M	Japan	Since birth	N/A	Japanese
Kyle	16	M	Japan	Since birth	N/A	Japanese
April	15	F	Philippines	N/A	Never travelled to Japan	N/A
Maria	17	F	Philippines	N/A	Travelled to Japan a few times	N/A
Mayumi	10	F	Japan	Since birth	N/A	Japanese
Susan	15	F	Philippines	N/A	Travelled to Japan once	N/A